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T.R.B. *from Washington*

Change of Mood

★ Generally unnoticed in Washington has been a toughening of the regulatory agencies here that is almost revolutionary. These agencies are the fourth branch of government; the policemen over big business. Because they operate in separate compartments and on technical matters consumers, whose interests they serve, rarely understand their crucial importance.

Over the years this reporter has always been amazed at how quickly these agencies change their mood to a new Administration even though only one or two top jobs may fall vacant at first. Now already the flabby Eisenhower approach is gone. Under a conservative government these agencies often become factotums of big business; astute attorney Richard Olney once told a railway tycoon to cheer up: the "part of wisdom is not to destroy the (Interstate Commerce) Commission, but to utilize it." Under Eisenhower the inert and corrupt Federal Communications Commission had all but become the agency of the industry it was supposed to regulate.

Note the items now hidden away in your paper: the Securities & Exchange Commission is preparing a major probe of the stock market; FCC Chairman Minow is pummeling TV programming; the National Labor Relations Board has a top-notch liberal chairman, Frank McCulloch; Joseph Swidler has replaced conservative Kuykendall at the Federal Power Commission; Kennedy has quietly given Ben Dorfman a recess appointment (originally blocked by the Senate Finance Committee) – a body which has been sending unacceptable tariff-boosting proposals to the White House. This is one of the most significant, and yet possibly the least noticed, changes that Kennedy has brought about since taking over in Washington.

Riding Caroline's Tricycle?

★ One of the things you would have expected Kennedy to do best he has done worse – establish communications with the American people. A President's top job is to be leader and educator of the country and somehow or other he hasn't done it. You can see this because his popularity rating remains so high. A President who goes out to sell dynamic new ideas, to assail old shibboleths, to denounce the so-called "conventional wisdom" always loses part of his support; he pays out some of his popularity counters to buy reforms. Partly, Kennedy is preoccupied with Berlin, though here more than elsewhere he ought to keep the people aware of what he is doing. Partly it is due to the cumbersomeness of the enlarged press conference. This vehicle has become top heavy. It is not a press conference, but a spectacle.

If we must be frank we must also say that we don't think the present White House press officers compare professionally with Jim Hagerty (though Hagerty had the advantage of seeming to run Ike instead of the other way around). Basically though, it is Kennedy's own responsibility. His last press conferences were August 30 and October 11, a record worse than Ike's. When Kennedy does talk and go to the people he does it very well.

Kennedy has been privately briefing little batches of publishers and editors, something other Presidents have tried without much success. This accounted for the preposterous episode of E. D. ("Ted") Dealey, publisher of the *Dallas Morning News*. To the embarrassment of 18 other Texas editors and publishers at the White House meeting Dealey rose and read a tirade against Kennedy, saying the country needed "a man on horseback" and that Kennedy seemed to be "riding Caroline's tricycle"; then Dealey proudly sent a dispatch to his paper telling what he had said at the off-the-record gathering.

What is only now becoming known is Kennedy's reply to the "man on horseback" speech. "I have the responsibility for the lives of 180 million Americans which you have not," he began calmly. He had observed, continued Kennedy quietly, that men tend to like the idea of war until they have tasted it, but that they quickly get enough of it. "Wars are easier to talk about than they are to fight," he told "Horseback" Dealey. "I'm just as tough as you are, Mr. Dealey, and I didn't get elected . . . by arriving at soft judgments."

A Kind of Will Rogers

★ One of the greatest mistakes Eisenhower ever made was to snoot Harry Truman. Truman is getting more mellow all the time – to everybody but Ike. Truman has a tremendous sense of the dignity of the role of President; one of the kindest things he ever did was to bring poor old Herbert Hoover back from a quarter century of contumely and contempt, honor him at the White House and give him a job: the "Hoover Commission." Hoover will never forget it. It enlarged both men. Truman expected something like that from Ike in 1953, got the cold shoulder instead. We watched Truman here in Washington last week. He is having the time of his life – a kind of ex-President Will Rogers, given a special national niche to say what he pleases and be quoted endlessly. But he is a terrible man to receive holier - than - thou treatment. Somehow self-righteous people like Eisenhower always seem to produce their own Harry Trumans. We don't think bouncy, belligerent Harry could be half so mellow if he didn't have Ike and Nixon to be mellow against.

Notes

★ Last week we told you of Christian Herter's appeal for US alliance with the Common Market; now it is out in the open, the start of a great bipartisan drive to reform tariff policies to make closer Western trade and political ties a reality . . . Communist infiltration in the US is so pervasive – in teaching, entertainment, journalism, the government – that Gen. Edwin A. Walker, honorable soldier and member of the John Birch Society, has resigned to fight it after being reprimanded in Germany; he will testify before a Senate subcommittee shortly; the radical right has needed a McCarthy: it has now found in Walker a martyr – has it found a leader?

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King of Beasts

One morning the tiger woke up in the jungle and told his mate that he was king of beasts.

"Leo, the lion, is king of beasts," she said.

"We need a change," said the tiger. "The creatures are crying for a change."

The tigress listened but she could hear no crying, except that of her cubs.

"I'll be king of beasts by the time the moon rises," said the tiger. "It will be a yellow moon with black stripes, in my honor."

"Oh, sure," said the tigress as she went to look after her young, one of whom, a male, very like his father, had got an imaginary thorn in his paw.

The tiger prowled through the jungle till he came to the lion's den. "Come out," he roared, "and greet the king of beasts! The king is dead, long live the king."

Inside the den, the lioness woke her mate. "The king is here to see you," she said.

"What king?" he inquired, sleepily.

"The king of beasts," she said.

"I am the king of beasts," roared Leo, and he charged out of the den to defend his crown against the pretender.

It was a terrible fight, and it lasted until the setting of the sun. All the animals of the jungle joined in, some taking the side of the tiger and others the side of the lion. Every creature from the aardvark to the zebra took part in the struggle to overthrow the lion or to repulse the tiger, and some did not know which they were fighting for, and some fought for both, and some fought whoever was nearest, and some fought for the sake of fighting.

"What are we fighting for?" someone asked the aardvark.

"The old order," said the aardvark.

"What are we dying for?" someone asked the zebra.

"The new order," said the zebra.

When the moon rose, fevered and gibbous, it shone upon a jungle in which nothing stirred except a macaw and a cockatoo, screaming in horror. All the beasts were dead except the tiger, and his days were numbered and his time was ticking away. He was monarch of all he surveyed, but it didn't seem to mean anything.

MORAL: *You can't very well be king of beasts if there aren't any.*

JAMES THURBER, "The Tiger Who Would Be King"

"The Tiger Who Would Be King."
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The Test Debate

In ordering the responsible agencies to make ready, now, for renewed explosions in the atmosphere "should such tests be deemed necessary . . . in the light of our evaluation of Soviet tests," the President was opening a safety valve to relieve the domestic pressures building up for peremptory test resumption. He has in effect postponed his final decision for the estimated month to six weeks that it may take to get meaningful intelligence analyses and technical studies of the radioactive debris generated by the succession of Soviet blasts.

Second guessing a decision which will obviously be determined on the strength of top secret official information, and which has been thoroughly obfuscated in the public mind by the leaks and counter-leaks of various special pleaders within the government, is not likely to be a fully satisfying exercise. Nevertheless, the American people are not without a considerable body of the factual data necessary for an objective evaluation of many of the pros and cons involved in the five principal aspects of the test issue.

The neutron bomb. The neutron bomb has been by far the most overrated of the improvements in nuclear weapons which, it is said, would be made possible by atmospheric testing. The neutron bomb with its "promise" of being able to kill people while leaving buildings undamaged is still very much in the drawing-board stage at Livermore Laboratories. Nobody knows whether it will prove possible to develop one, and the US has not begun to approach the point at which the development of a neutron bomb can be said to hinge critically on above-ground testing. Moreover, the strategic utility of a neutron bomb has not been demonstrated. Its value to the US in local war situations would depend on the freedom of the US to use neutron bombs without the Soviets retaliating in kind – or with other tactical nuclear weapons which they now possess – and this is a most fanciful supposition. (The notion that the US could use the neutron bomb with impunity if it got the weapon first rests on the idea that the Soviets would not classify it as "nuclear" and would thus feel constrained from countering with their existing nuclear force.) If the Soviets should themselves initiate the use of neutron bombs, the US could deal with the military threat by drawing on the wide variety of tactical nuclear weapons already in the American arsenal.

Lighter, more powerful warheads. The development of lighter, more powerful warheads for existing missiles such as the Minuteman or Polaris, or future generations of missiles, depends on reducing the yield-weight ratio, that is, increasing the amount of power per pound of warhead. It is authoritatively understood that the US is even now relatively close to having attained the maximum practical possibility in yield to weight ratio, and that much of the reduction in ratio possible can be achieved through underground tests.

Testing operational weapons. Since the test moratorium the United States has added a wide variety of nuclear weapons (an estimated 28) to its arsenal. The 16 missiles on the five Polaris submarines and the Davy Crockett warheads installed in Europe have never actually been tested. If testing involved purely military considerations, it would be desirable to be "sure" that these arms really worked. But their reliability is certified now in scientific and military circles beyond any reasonable doubt.

Anti-missile missiles. Here it is difficult to arrive at a firm judgment since new approaches to anti-missile research are constantly being worked out. The Nike-Zeus variety of anti-missile missile now in development does not depend critically on above-ground testing because it would explode on direct contact with the oncoming "enemy" and its destructive effects are taken for granted. In one of our projected anti-missile defense systems, however, the explosion would be calculated to occur at a considerable distance from the target; and the question to be answered is how much of a distance would be allowable for an explosion which would still (largely through radiation effects) dessicate the missile or deflect it from its course.

Most official indications are that such an anti-missile system is at this stage no more than a twinkle in the eye of someone at the Pentagon and that it is not likely to be very far along in development before 1965. Should this prospect change, the argument for atmospheric testing for a limited number of the new type of anti-missile weapons might appear compelling.

Weapons effects. One of the relatively persuasive reasons given for above-ground testing is the desire to determine the effects of nuclear explosions on radio communication and radar detection systems, and on hardened missile sites. There is some evidence that the electromagnetic effects of large nuclear explosions do tend to jam communications systems. Communications were disturbed throughout the 1500-mile surrounding area following the 1958 American test series in the Pacific; but this was a phenomenon not noted in previous tests, and may have been caused by atmospheric conditions peculiar to the occasion and the locale.

If similar effects should be found after other tests, it would be important to establish the scientific character of this phenomenon and to devise reserve measures to assure the survival of the US military command and control system in the event of a nuclear war. It would be relevant also to know the effect of a nuclear blast on the hardened missiles that the US is beginning to install. Both of these ends are important but not critical. Much could be done by the extrapolation of existing data on the effects of nuclear weapons to determine the hardness of a missile site.

A discussion of the specific reasons advanced for

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atmospheric testing shows, in short, that while significant military use could be made of the findings gained from tests, there are not at this time overriding security reasons for a test resumption. Weighed against psychological and political factors on the side of continuing to abstain and thus to underscore the Soviet violation of the moratorium, the military reasons so far publicly apparent are unconvincing. However, what has been left out of the discussion so far is an unknown – the fear that the Russians, through their latest series of tests, may have come upon something which our nuclear scientists have not conceived of and which could only be discovered through continued nuclear testing. In the long run, if the Soviets continue to explode large numbers of nuclear weapons, the US may have no choice but to resume testing in order to insure against some now unimaginable breakthrough.

The problem of secrecy in the test debate deserves special comment. For one suspects that a good deal more information than has so far been made available could be released without offense to security strictures. Much relevant information has, in fact, been leaked by supporters of certain military projects (notably the neutron bomb) linked with the controversy. A definitive White Paper from the White House balancing the facts of nuclear technology, and delineating in a disinterested manner the issues to be decided, would make possible more meaningful participation by public opinion in the critical next phase of the test debate.

Mr. Ball's New Trade Policy

One of the unexpected consequences of the Cold War has been the virtual disappearance of old-fashioned class war within the nations of Western Europe; the greater threat has, in this case, driven out the lesser. And in the conditions of social peace that prevail in France and Western Germany, as well as Scandinavia and the Low Countries, the economies of Europe have been expanding at twice the US speed. Europeans have lost their fear of enterprise and competition to a degree that no one could have guessed a decade and a half ago. Productivity, the US idea of maximizing output to boost earnings, has been paired to what it takes to support such mass production – an American-size market.

No one European country is that large, but taken together the six nations in the European Economic Community do approximate the US internal market. Moreover, when they are joined by the seven powers (including the United Kingdom) linked in the European Free Trade Association, they will have created for themselves a market of 325 million customers.

The creation of this vast new economic entity comes 27 years after Franklin Roosevelt, faced with almost a fourth of the US labor force unemployed and armed with a mandate for a new approach to the unemployment problem, secured the enactment of the first of the Reciprocal Trade Agreement Acts. The policy of liberalizing our trade with other countries in order, among other things, to help reduce unemployment here has been maintained up to the present time by successive renewals of the original legislation. The latest of these runs out in the middle of next year. The question today is whether a simple repetition of the original Act, as amended in the 1958 extension, will now suffice.

After much unofficial discussion through most of this year, the present Administration announced, in a speech on November 1 by George W. Ball, the Undersecretary of State for Economic Affairs, that it had decided on a policy. "After all," said Mr. Ball, "we have been the evangelists of the virtues of free competition. We have preached this gospel incessantly to our European friends. If they now practice what we preach, we should be neither surprised nor dismayed."

Even as it is presently constituted, Mr. Ball went on to say, the Common Market is more than a European arrangement. "It is the center of a trading system whose ramifications spread into Africa and other continents . . . [including] some 16 independent countries and a number of areas in varying degrees of dependency." Further, England is the center of still another world trading system with a population of about three fourths of a billion people. The gist of Mr. Ball's statement is that it is manifestly impossible to advance the liberalization of our trading relationships with this emerging combine of free nations on an item-by-item basis, as the Reciprocal Trade legislation requires. It is necessary to replace this with an outright enlargement of the President's power to negotiate mutual tariff reductions "across the board" or by commodity groups.

At the present time some 6.8 percent of the domestic labor force is unemployed, and Walter W. Heller, the Chairman of the President's Council of Economic Advisers, has said that recovery will be incomplete in the United States until the level of unemployment falls to at least 4 percent. This is not expected through next year. Indeed, there is only a bare possibility that it will happen in 1963. The immediate prospect, therefore, is that opposition to further trade liberalization will become more pronounced rather than less. The Administration will need better arguments to surmount it than have been used before. Many of the American industries most affected by the impact of imports, such as textile mills, are concentrated in semi-rural areas where they offer opportunities for industrial employment. The reduction in the number of factory jobs in that industry, which can be traced to imports, is slight indeed. But it has been confused with such developments as the very sharp decline of employment in the anthracite industry (which is not subject to import competition,

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but has become technologically obsolescent), and the fall of employment in the automotive industries, which appears to be caused in part by automation.

Earlier this year the Administration was rebuffed by the Congress in its effort to obtain legislation providing for the retraining of workers displaced by automation. As a consequence, the problem of hard-core unemployment will persist that much longer. And so will the resistance to the legislation of a liberal trade policy. The future of the bold new policy enunciated by Mr. Ball may very well depend on the degree to which the Administration is willing to endorse a parallel adjustment assistance policy to provide for the workers, management and investors who may suffer, in the short run, because of expanded imports.

Stalinist Non-Compliance

With his purge in the past year of 44 out of the 140 district party secretaries making up the nationwide control network of the Soviet Communist Party, Nikita Khrushchev had advertised to the world his pre-eminent personal stature within the Soviet power structure and his solid position, in particular, as first secretary of the Party. There had really been little room left for doubt concerning his pre-eminence after the 1957 showdown in the Central Committee and the rout of the "anti-Party" group of Molotov, Kaganovitch, Malenkov and – as has now been officially acknowledged – the stalwart Voroshilov. And the new Party Program promulgated in July was the Khrushchev Program for a Communist future repugnant to the old Bolsheviks.

But why, then, the spectacular display of intra-Party fireworks at the 22nd Congress? If one were content to explain the removal of the body of Stalin from the Mausoleum on October 30 as Khrushchev's supremely histrionic way of proclaiming his power to Mao or to the Soviet people, the unanswered question would still be why he chose to revive the attack on the Stalinists and to broadcast a crisis in world Communist ranks at precisely the moment of a major crisis with the West.

The "anti-Party" group has been charged at the Congress with direct and personal responsibility for some of the most heinous crimes perpetrated during Stalin's reign. Thus, Malenkov is accused of bearing personal responsibility for purging and arresting – in collusion with Tezhov, the dreaded chief of the secret police – "half of the Party organization of Byelorussia" in the mid-1930's. Kaganovitch, it turns out, is a "degenerate," who in Stalin's time "surrounded himself with a pack of unprincipled bootlickers, beat up the cadres faithful to the Party, and hounded and terrorized the leading workers of the republic." And as for Molotov, he "personally took part in carrying out mass repression" and put into effect "the illegal methods of sentencing people by lists."

The purpose of reviving the attacks, we are told, does not stem from Khrushchev's fear of the "anti-Party" people. "These political corpses," said Chairman of the State Security Committee Shelepin, "present not even a shadow of a danger." The purpose is to "teach a lesson" to all potential enemies, and to liquidate, once and for all, the "personality cult." Yet if this is so, then the speakers owe us an explanation for contributing to a new "cult" – the cult of Khrushchev. For Khrushchev is a man whose reports to the Congress "contain a profound Marxist analysis of world events"; whose "profound Party-inspired and responsive attitude to the workers, ability to listen attentively to the voice of the ordinary people serves as an example to us all"; and who is possessed of a "pure bright source" of "active wisdom and vast organizing talent."

Most interpretations tend to look for the reality of the Soviet situation in the extremes of relentless internecine strife or iron one-man control. Actually, Mr. Khrushchev's worries may at one and the same time have to do with a latent power threat and with the unobstructed use of the power he now has in behalf of the Khrushchev Program; that is to say, with day-to-day challenges to his operational control from the men now in their fifties and sixties who man the higher echelons of the Party cadres. An underground of sullen non-compliance on the part of these men and their sympathizers could obviously frustrate implementation of the reforms necessary for a "transition to Communism" which is to them the worst sort of heresy. The Khrushchev line – ratified in the Party Program – that the present generation will see the final transition from socialism to Communism, that the dictatorship of the proletariat may become unnecessary and that the threat of capitalist encirclement has receded; his efforts to reshape the Party so that discipline can be enforced (and *elan* recaptured) from the bottom up, through a voluntarist embrace of the leadership and its policies – all of this constitutes an assault on the doctrinaire Bolshevik faith which was sure to arouse stubborn, if tacit resistance. And this in itself, even if not linked with the power equation in Moscow and the larger issues of relations with Peking and the West, would seem to call for a radical purge of the Party ranks.

But a wholesale purge has hitherto been beyond Khrushchev's powers. He could transfer and demote Party and state officials, but he has not been able to get rid of them altogether because it is awkward, under the Party code, to expel a comrade unless he is guilty of some specified crime. Now that Mr. Khrushchev has obtained the conviction of the "anti-Party" leaders for their share in Stalin's crimes, he may conceivably be in a position to expel at his pleasure virtually anyone in the Party. It will be most instructive to observe how far he is, in fact, free to go in his intra-Party offensive.

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The Fading Strength of Vietnam

by Jerry A. Rose

Saigon

After six hours of darkness, after balancing step by step along the narrow dikes that separate one rice-field from the next, there was dawn: flat and fog-grey. The Vietnamese rangers glanced toward their American Special Forces instructor. He raised his hand, and the attack was on. Rifle fire erupted suddenly from the woods ahead. The bullets hit the water of the rice-fields to raise small geysers. The rangers, still charging, began to return the fire. The rangers entered the edge of the woods, and the guerrilla rifle fire ceased. Now the guerrillas were running. But this time the elusive Communist guerrilla was unaware of one thing: on the other side of the village was another platoon of rangers. And five of the estimated fifteen guerrillas were caught. Yet despite the frenzy of the chase, those five had managed to hide their weapons.

The two platoons united and swept back through Nhuan Duc village with its scattered straw huts and a population of less than a hundred, on the far edge of rice-fields. People were rounded up. Homes were searched. And from this typical village came an astounding array of Communist propaganda: song-sheets, banners, notebooks, a newspaper, printed tracts and cartoons. Not one scrap of government propaganda was to be found.

On the way back, a Vietnamese lieutenant who spoke English began to translate some of the Communist propaganda. It had one major theme: *down with the Americans, down with Diem, down with the American-Diem clique.* One sign said: "The Americans will go back to America. Diem will go back to America. Where will you go?" A small mimeographed tract read: "Put your guns on the American instructors and pull the trigger." A cartoon showed the Viet Cong and the people pushing Uncle Sam and President Diem, both loaded with bags of dollars, to the edge of a cliff. One pamphlet emphasized land reform, another, inequality among people. There was no mention of Ho Chi Minh or of North Vietnam. Leader worship was avoided. Each fighting peasant was a hero. It was simple and effective. "The only good propaganda out here," said one of the American instructors, "is that damn stuff put out by the Viet Cong!"

Where, then, was the government's propaganda? How was the government of President Diem keeping in touch with its people? Well, it wasn't – and isn't.

Still, is any propaganda so convincing that it could induce a man to live like a rabbit in a narrow warren during the day and prey like a bat during the night? Is any propaganda so convincing that it can induce a man to keep silent under the most cruel torture? What motivates these Communist guerrillas?

Here, personal struggle is the keynote. "Act for the Viet Cong and you act for yourself." The point is brought home in a number of ways. First, terrorism: to cooperate with the government is to risk one's life – inversely, cooperation with the Viet Cong is a sort of self-protection. Second, the Viet Cong deliberately recruit or kidnap young men from as many families as they can. No family wants to see its son (or often daughter) killed, and thus refuses intelligence information even under torture (South Vietnamese intelligence is notoriously poor; one Vietnamese general said: "Nine out of ten attacks on the Viet Cong fail because of either our poor intelligence or their excellent intelligence."). These ever-increasing family ties between Viet Cong and peasants are built on a solid base: after the Geneva Agreement of 1954, there were over 100,000 Communist Viet Minh sent north, and many have by now returned to rejoin their families, to take part in and to advance the revolution.

Ho Chi Minh is played down in striking contrast to the father-king role played by Diem. Thus, attention is focused on a nation, not an individual. Further, political cadres (and for that matter, military groups – the two usually work hand in hand) live among the people, even helping in the farming (when they later take their cut of the rice-harvest, they can more or less legitimately say, "we worked for it"). One of the Australians kidnapped recently by the Viet Cong said: "The guerrillas paid the farmer for food and lodging in the place where we stayed." The extreme of this technique is carried on by those Communists who enter the jungles to live with the mountain tribes: these cadres file down and blacken their teeth, pierce their ear-lobes, wear loinclothes, learn the native dialect, hunt and fish with primitive traps, and take native wives. By contrast the government approach to these tribes has been somewhat well-intentioned, and very ineffective. The government has attempted and is attempting to resettle the natives near large villages where they can be surveyed and integrated. Unfortunately, the natives do not take well to this displacement – nor would

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anyone whose life has been completely disrupted in order to protect and preserve some other person.

But to obtain the cooperation of the populace is one thing; to produce a fanatic guerrilla fighter is another. And this requires a carefully planned religio-psychological conversion. Among the Viet Cong bands, there is an incredible *esprit de corps*, a feeling of brotherhood. Here is a secret organization founded on some primitive rite of loving and killing. To this simple ritual, the peasant-guerrilla can adhere with fanatic devotion; from this simple ritual, he can gain a sense of power and purpose in life. And because the movement is like a religion, and its followers like apostles, discipline is created, created out of the sheer drive of fanaticism. To one degree or another, 70 to 90 percent of the entire peasant population now leans toward the Viet Cong.

Here it must be emphasized the Viet Cong, though obviously Communist-led (directed from North Vietnam), is *not* founded on a Communist ideal. Like its predecessor, the Viet Minh, its prime objective is *against* something, not *for* something. The Viet Minh were against the French; the Viet Cong are against the government of President Ngo Dinh Diem. Of course, if the Viet Cong were to win the war of subversion in South Vietnam, then the country would end in the Communist bloc; but many do not realize this, or if they do, feel it is worth the risk – or their hate for Diem is such that they do not care. Two religious sects, the Cao Dai and the Hoa Hao, both of which President Diem viciously betrayed after the armistice, now have joined hands with the Viet Cong.

Discontent in the Army

Diem's unpopularity in Vietnam is now so universal that it is amazing he still remains in power (it will be still more amazing if he retains that power much longer). He is intensely disliked by the Army: the ordinary soldier who receives about $10 a month, one or two days of leave in one or two years (if he's lucky), and no promotion at all unless he oils the palm of an officer or has influential friends, laughs at you when you ask why he is fighting (desertions from the army are increasing, and many are going over to the Viet Cong arms in hand; one of the main supply sources for the guerrillas has been the army). Even among high-ranking officers there is vast discontent. One very high-ranking officer said to me: "We are discussing a *coup*, but Diem has so organized the army that [the very high-ranking officers] have no command over troops. The hierarchy of power goes from division or battalion commander, selected on the basis of personal loyalty to Diem, not on qualifications, to the presidency. The army is designed now to maintain Diem's power, not to beat the Viet Cong."

On the other end of the social scale is the attitude expressed by a cyclos driver: "Colonel Nam [the well-liked liaison officer to the International Control Commission who was recently kidnapped and killed] was murdered by Diem. Colonel Nam was too honest." More frequently, the uneducated or semi-educated man will lash out against President Diem's family: against Madame Nhu, Mr. Nhu, Mr. Can *etc.* They are all accused of corruption (the President himself is generally held to be better than his immediate family – but more and more people are unwilling to forgive him for being "good-hearted but misled"). The Catholicism of the "royal family" (as it is now termed) comes in for special attack – especially since one of the President's politically powerful brothers is an Archbishop. Here the allegations can be somewhat substantiated (though again, the truth does not really matter, it is what people *believe* is true). No visitor to Vietnam can help but be struck by the well-being of the priesthood and the new church in almost every village. For a population over 80 percent Buddhist, this religious favoritism is a bit difficult to swallow. One mild Buddhist said to me: "I hope the next president is also a Catholic, otherwise there may be a massacre." Apparently, the Catholics themselves are not a little worried: an estimated 50 percent are now anti-Diem.

At this point, it is almost needless to say that the professional people and the intellectual elite are against Diem. Many complain as would any educated person living under a dictatorship. But there are many others who center their complaints on Diem's ineptitude in dealing with the Viet Cong and improving the economy of the country. The ineptitude stems in a large degree from Diem's personality.

Mr. Vu Van Thai, former director-general of the budget and foreign aid (who resigned and left the country in July) put it this way: "Diem has, unfortunately, come to think of himself as a god. Megalomania is probably the word. In any case, he can no longer take advice or criticism. He wants only yes-men and flatterers. Consequently, many men of talent have left the government and refuse to work for it. The greatest waste in Vietnam is its human talent."

All this criticism is harsh, and, unhappily, much of it is justified. But Diem is the product of a tradition. Mandarinism with its innumerable unpleasant characteristics is a firmly entrenched institution in Vietnam. As a political and social system it grew to be very ugly. It bred a disdain for the working class: men wore long finger-nails to show they did not indulge in manual labor (the habit is still widely practiced among professional men and students). Abstract philosophy and *belles lettres* were the pulse of the mandarin-mind; the incredibly outdated educational system of Vietnam and

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the government's abstruse political philosophy called "personalism" are direct heirs to mandarin thinking. As a political system, it functioned on nepotism, influential friends, obsequiousness to an immediate superior, and haughty arrogance to an immediate inferior. Thus one Vietnamese lawyer neatly summed up the mandarin attitude and its heritage today: "In the heart of every Vietnamese there is a dictator."

Dictatorship is the almost inevitable outgrowth of false humility and false pride, and of manifold dishonesties in government. Mandarinism established a rigid measure for one man's humanity-value over another's, and as a result each man had to, and has to, find himself lord and master over some poorer soul. This derogatory attitude toward a social and financial inferior can be changed, providing the educated of the country are willing to force the change. And they probably would be willing to make that tremendously important change – to have a national unity which encompasses all, from farmer to doctor – when the political trappings of mandarinism are thrown off: when nepotism, favoritism, corruption, and dictatorship are eliminated.

What can force the change in mandarin attitudes is some form of government that lies between democracy and single-man dictatorship. Another dictator like Diem would not only be demoralizing but it would again run the risk of one man's miscalculations. Democracy, on the other hand, would be no good as there is too much fanatic disagreement among all sorts of minor political figures, and the country, in the face of increasing aggression, cannot afford one minute of indecision. If a change in government occurs, the new government must step in with a solid plan and initiate that plan immediately.

Hope Lies in a Brain-Trust

What, then, lies between democracy and a single-man dictatorship? "A brain-trust," said an astute Vietnamese politician. A brain-trust which drew the best men of the country into it, which asked for the advice of those who were not part of it, which involved every capable man in the government. "It would be a sort of oligarchy whose dictatorial powers were inwardly controlled and limited by its members."

"How in the world will you ever agree to the members of this oligarchy?" I asked.

"The Americans can help. If for once they don't hesitate, they can help organize the composition of the government. Vietnam needs the directive help of the US – not only its money. America must help organize the ruling body if Vietnam is to survive." In this politician's mind, as in the minds of many political thinkers in Vietnam, the involvement of each and every person is the pivotal point in Vietnam's struggle for survival.

The other main points of a liberal Vietnamese's program are almost always the same:

1. Military: pay and leave-time must be improved, a system of promotion established. The army must be greatly augmented (from 170,000 to at least 300,000). Civil guard training and equipment must be ameliorated. But most important, self-defense militias for each village must be established by drawing on the people of each village, training them, and equipping them (the government now refuses to give self-defense units proper equipment in fear that it will end up in the hands of the Communists – and it probably would under the present state of morale). The army must operate in smaller more mobile units; commanders of these units must be treated with responsibility (no one dares to act in the present army without the accord of some higher officer – as a result, there have been times when beseiged posts did not receive reinforcements for 48 hours). Protection must be afforded to the self-defense units (better radio communications between them and larger forces in the area), and through the self-defense units to the people. With protection against Viet Cong retaliation, intelligence gathering will be greatly improved.

2. Propaganda: propaganda teams must circulate with the army. They should work with squad or even platoon escorts if necessary. No village should be left untouched. Every man, woman, and child should come to feel that the government is personally looking out for him or her. Distribution of radios would help. The spirit of nationalism should be nourished by asking each person's advice – and acting on that advice as often as possible. Hate too should be used as a weapon: it should be turned against the Viet Cong just as the Viet Cong has turned it against the government.

3. Economy: austerity must be embraced, luxury items cut out. Small industry should be encouraged with low interest government loans. The search for agricultural improvement must be enormously stepped up with teams of agricultural experts and experiments with new crops. Geological exploration must begin.

4. Education: more technicians must be produced.

5. Politics and law: absolute, incorruptible, untainted justice (as existed in Malaya) must be imposed. Any government official caught indulging in corruption of any kind must be dealt with severely. All government financial affairs should be open to public inspection.

But as this is written, the hard-headed Vietnamese men of ideals seem far from power. Viet Cong aggression increases from day to day, the economy worsens, nationalism is non-existent in terms of the government, the political leaders are set in their ways – and their ways are clearly inadequate. The strength of South Vietnam is fading.

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Wouldn't It Startle Us?

William S. White, political commentator for *Harpers*, is a writing person of considerable eminence with enough weight of judgment, one might think, to relieve him of any fear of being classified with the lunatic fringe. Yet in the November issue of that magazine he writes as nervously as those members of the Zenith Rotary Club, in Sinclair Lewis' *Babbitt*, who spoke in favor of raising money to establish a symphony orchestra; they insisted that they favored the project purely as good publicity for Zenith, not because they were guilty of the infamy of actually liking music.

Mr. White opposes the ideas of Senator Goldwater and the John Birch Society; but in so doing he is horribly afraid that he may incur suspicion of being an adherent of Henry A. Wallace, at least, maybe even of Earl Browder. He will, of course. Senator Goldwater may not accuse him, but the John Birchites brand as a Communist anyone who refuses to accept their idiotic gabble. But why should it worry Mr. White? It is characteristic of nuts to think every man of sense insane.

In an effort to establish his exact position Mr. White describes a political spectrum, placing what he calls the Irresponsibles at the infra-red and ultraviolet ends, with true Conservatives and true Liberals in the middle, separated from the Irresponsibles by bands of the "woolly-minded." He rates himself as a true Conservative, professing considerable respect for such true Liberals as Senator Humphrey, but less for the woolly-minded, such as Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.

However, under the subhead "More Than Treason," he attacks "the notion spread by some in recent months that the whole of the military establishment, the whole of the 'military mind' should be held suspect because some officers held or spread right-wing political views." This he calls "a dreadful act of discredit." That's pretty rough on Eisenhower, who is supposed to know something about the military mind and has publicly expressed his anxiety lest it become dominant.

The interesting thing, though, is not Mr. White's case in itself, but what it reveals of the state of political thinking in this country. Categories are conveniences, not ideas; and when men are engaged in a genuine battle of ideas, they waste little time worrying about categories. If they do worry, the reasonable inference is that they are short of ideas.

It may be plausibly argued that Truman's Point Four was the last genuine idea that has been introduced into American political philosophy, and that was nearly 13 years ago. Kennedy's Alliance for Progress may have been another, but it seems somehow to have been lost in the shuffle. For the rest, we have been threshing over old straw, and it is easy to believe that the popularity of Birchism is due mainly to the public's boredom with the futility of it all.

But we are not likely to break out of the dreary old round as long as our political leaders feel compelled to explain that if they vote in favor of a symphony orchestra, it is strictly for publicity purposes, not for any real love of music. All over the world we feed the starving, and nurse the sick, and teach the illiterate, not because it is right to do so, but because if we don't we fear that they may go Communist. Rather than risk being found guilty of charity, we proclaim that we are submitting to blackmail!

Well, heaven knows the introduction of the moral issue into politics is a dangerous thing. Historically, it has made a sickening record of hypocrisy, deceit, lying and betrayal; and all too often it has led to that overweening arrogance that has been the ruin of many once great nations. Nevertheless, the thing exists and there is power in it. Cynics may sneer at Woodrow Wilson, but they can't sneer away the fact that the old boy shook the world.

In one of his memorable addresses Wilson confessed that he didn't know whether he was a liberal or not. He did claim, though, that he knew the difference between right and wrong, and he may have been mistaken in that; but proceeding on that assumption he made such an impact upon the world that it has never been the same since; and whatever else he may have done, he never bored us.

It may be that we have attained a level of sophistication at which the categorical imperative has lost all potency, but here is one opinion to the contrary. If some leader of high intellectual capacity should offer to the American people a new idea backed by one argument only, to wit, "This is right" – well, he would certainly be denounced, and he might be lynched, but he would startle this country out of its intellectual torpor, and he just might achieve Wilson's ambition to "release the generous energies of our people"– to the astonishment of all mankind.

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The Logic of Survival in a Lunatic World

by Robert Brustein

"The man who declares that survival at all costs is the end of existence is morally dead, because he's prepared to sacrifice all other values which give life its meaning."

– *Sidney Hook*

". . . It's better to die on one's feet than live on one's knees," Nately retorted with triumphant and lofty conviction. "I guess you've heard that saying before."

"Yes, I certainly have," mused the treacherous old man, smiling again. "But I'm afraid you have it backward. It is better to *live* on one's feet than die on one's knees. *That* is the way the saying goes."

– *Catch-22*

Like all superlative works of comedy – and I am ready to argue that this is one of the most bitterly funny works in the language – *Catch-22* is based on an unconventional but utterly convincing internal logic. In the very opening pages, when we come upon a number of Air Force officers malingering in a hospital – one censoring all the modifiers out of enlisted men's letters and signing the censor's name "Washington Irving," another pursuing tedious conversations with boring Texans in order to increase his life span by making time pass slowly, still another storing horse chestnuts in his cheeks to give himself a look of innocence – it seems obvious that an inordinate number of Joseph Heller's characters are, by all conventional standards, mad. It is a triumph of Mr. Heller's skill that he is so quickly able to persuade us 1) that the most lunatic are the most logical, and 2) that it is our conventional standards which lack any logical consistency. The sanest looney of them all is the apparently harebrained central character, an American bombardier of Syrian extraction named Captain John Yossarian, who is based on a mythical Italian island (Pianosa) during World War II. For while many of his fellow officers seem indifferent to their own survival, and most of his superior officers are overtly hostile to his, Yossarian is animated solely by a desperate determination to stay alive:

Catch-22
by Joseph Heller
(Simon and Schuster; $5.95)

"It was a vile and muddy war, and Yossarian could have lived without it – lived forever, perhaps. Only a fraction of his countrymen would give up their lives to win it, and it was not his ambition to be among them. . . . That men would die was a matter of necessity; *which* men would die, though, was a matter of circumstance, and Yossarian was willing to be the victim of anything but circumstance."

The single narrative thread in this crazy patchwork of anecdotes, episodes, and character portraits traces Yossarian's herculean efforts – through caution, cowardice, defiance, subterfuge, strategem, and subversion, through feigning illness, goofing off, and poisoning the company's food with laundry soap – to avoid being victimized by circumstance, a force represented in the book as Catch-22. For Catch-22 is the unwritten loophole in every written law which empowers the authorities to revoke your rights whenever it suits their cruel whims; it is, in short, the principle of absolute evil in a malevolent, mechanical, and incompetent world. Because of Catch-22, justice is mocked, the innocent are victimized, and Yossarian's squadron is forced to fly more than double the number of missions prescribed by Air Force code. Dogged by Catch-22, Yossarian becomes the anguished witness to the ghoulish slaughter of his crew members and the destruction of all his closest friends, until finally his fear of death becomes so intense that he refuses to wear a uniform, after his own has been besplattered with the guts of his dying

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gunner, and receives a medal standing naked in formation. From this point on, Yossarian's logic becomes so pure that everyone thinks him mad, for it is the logic of sheer survival, dedicated to keeping him alive in a world noisily clamoring for his annihilation.

According to this logic, Yossarian is surrounded on all sides by hostile forces: his enemies are distinguished less by their nationality than by their ability to get him killed. Thus, Yossarian feels a blind, electric rage against the Germans whenever they hurl flak at his easily penetrated plane; but he feels an equally profound hatred for those of his own countrymen who exercise an arbitrary power over his life and well-being. Heller's huge cast of characters, therefore, is dominated by a large number of comic malignities, *genus Americanus*, drawn with a grotesqueness so audacious that they somehow transcend caricature entirely and become vividly authentic. These include: Colonel Cathcart, Yossarian's commanding officer, whose consuming ambition to get his picture in the *Saturday Evening Post* motivates him to volunteer his command for every dangerous command, and to initiate prayers during briefing sessions ("I don't want any of this Kingdom of God or Valley of Death stuff. That's all too negative. . . . Couldn't we pray for a tighter bomb pattern?"), an idea he abandons only when he learns enlisted men pray to the same God; General Peckem, head of Special Services, whose strategic objective is to replace General Dreedle, the wing commander, capturing every bomber group in the US Air Force ("If dropping bombs on the enemy isn't a special service, I wonder what in the world is"); Captain Black, the squadron intelligence officer, who inaugurates the Glorious Loyalty Oath Crusade in order to discomfort a rival, forcing all officers (except the rival, who is thereupon declared a Communist) to sign a new oath whenever they get their flak suits, their pay checks, or their haircuts; Lieutenant Scheisskopf, paragon of the parade ground, whose admiration for efficient formations makes him scheme to screw nickel-alloy swivels into every cadet's back for perfect ninety degree turns; and cadres of sadistic officers, club-happy MPs, and muddleheaded agents of the CID, two of whom, popping in and out of rooms like farcical private eyes, look for Washington Irving throughout the action, finally pinning the rap on the innocent chaplain.

These are Yossarian's antagonists, all of them reduced to a single exaggerated humor, and all identified by their totally mechanical attitude towards human life. Heller has a profound hatred for this kind of military mind, further anatomized in a wacky scene before the Action Board which displays his (and their) animosity in a manner both hilarious and scarifying. But Heller, at war with much larger forces than the army, has provided his book with much wider implications than a war novel. For the author (apparently sharing the Italian belief that vengeance is a dish which tastes best cold) has been nourishing his grudges for so long that they have expanded to include the post-war American world. Through the agency of grotesque comedy, Heller has found a way to confront the humbug, hypocrisy, cruelty, and sheer stupidity of our mass society – qualities which have made the few other Americans who care almost speechless with baffled rage – and through some miracle of prestidigitation, Pianosa has become a satirical microcosm for many of the macrocosmic idiocies of our time. Thus, the author flourishes his Juvenalian scourge at government-subsidized agriculture (and farmers, one of whom "spent every penny he didn't earn on new land to increase the amount of alfalfa he did not grow"); at the exploitation of American Indians, evicted from their oil-rich land; at smug psychiatrists; at bureaucrats and patriots; at acquisitive war widows; at high-spirited American boys; and especially, and most vindictively, at war profiteers.

This last satirical flourish, aimed at the whole mystique of corporation capitalism, is embodied in the fantastic adventures of Milo Minderbinder, the company mess officer, and a paradigm of good natured Jonsonian cupidity. Anxious to put the war on a business-like basis, Milo has formed a syndicate designed to corner the world market on all available foodstuffs, which he then sells to army messhalls at huge profits. Heady with success (his deals have made him Mayor of every town in Sicily, Vice-Shah of Oran, Caliph of Baghdad, Imam of Damascus, and the Sheik of Araby), Milo soon expands his activities, forming a private army which he hires out to the highest bidder. The climax of Milo's career comes when he fulfills a contract with the Germans to bomb and strafe his own outfit, directing his planes from the Pianosa control tower and justifying the action

Words for a Trumpet Chorale Celebrating the Autumn

"The trumpet is a brilliant instrument."
– Dietrich Buxtehude

Come and come forth and come up from the cup of
Your dumbness, stunned and numb, come with
The statues and believed in,
Thinking *this is nothing*, deceived.

Come to the summer and sun,
Come see upon that height, and that sum
In the seedtime of the winter's absolute,
How yearly the phoenix inhabits the fruit.
Behold, above all, how the tall ball
Called the body is but a drum, but a bell
Summoning the soul
To rise from the catacomb of sleep and fear
To the blaze and death of summer,

Rising from the lithe forms of the pure
Furs of the rising flames, slender and supple
Which are the consummation of the blaze of fall and of all.

DELMORE SCHWARTZ

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with the stirring war cry: "What's good for the syndicate is good for the country." Milo has almost succeeded in his ambition to pre-empt the field of war for private enterprise when he makes a fatal mistake: he has cornered the entire Egyptian cotton market and is unable to unload it anywhere. Having failed to pass it off to his own messhall in the form of chocolate-covered cotton, Milo is finally persuaded by Yossarian to bribe the American government to take it off his hands: "If you run into trouble, just tell everybody that the security of the country requires a strong domestic Egyptian cotton speculating industry." The Minderbinder sections – in showing the basic incompatibility of idealism and economics by satirizing the patriotic cant which usually accompanies American greed – illustrate the procedure of the entire book: the ruthless ridicule of hypocrisy through a technique of farce-fantasy, beneath which the demon of satire lurks, prodding fat behinds with a red-hot pitchfork.

It should be abundantly clear, then, that *Catch-22*, despite some of the most outrageous sequences since *A Night at the Opera*, is an intensely serious work. Heller has certain technical similarities to the Marx Brothers, Max Schulman, Kingsley Amis, Al Capp, and S. J. Perelman, but his mordant intelligence, closer to that of Nathanael West, penetrates the surface of the merely funny to expose a world of ruthless self-advancement, gruesome cruelty, and flagrant disregard for human life – a world, in short, very much like our own as seen through a magnifying glass, distorted for more perfect accuracy. Considering his indifference to surface reality, it is absurd to judge Heller by standards of psychological realism (or, for that matter, by conventional artistic standards at all, since his book is as formless as any picaresque epic). He is concerned entirely with that thin boundary of the surreal, the borderline between hilarity and horror, which, much like the apparent formlessness of the unconscious, has its own special integrity and coherence. Thus, Heller will never use comedy for its own sake; each joke has a wider significance in the intricate pattern, so that laughter becomes a prologue for some grotesque revelation. This gives the reader an effect of surrealistic dislocation, intensified by a wierd, rather flat, impersonal style, full of complicated reversals, swift transitions, abrupt shifts in chronological time, and manipulated identities (*e.g.* if a private named Major Major Major is promoted to Major by a faulty IBM machine, or if a malingerer, sitting out a doomed mission, is declared dead through a bureaucratic error, then this remains their permanent fate), as if all mankind was determined by a mad and merciless mechanism.

Thus, Heller often manages to heighten the macabre obscenity of total war much more effectively through its gruesome comic aspects than if he had written realistic descriptions. And thus, the most delicate pressure is enough to send us over the line from farce into phantasmagoria. In the climactic chapter, in fact, the book leaves comedy altogether and becomes an eerie nightmare of terror. Here, Yossarian, walking through the streets of Rome as though through an Inferno, observes soldiers molesting drunken women, fathers beating ragged children, policemen clubbing innocent bystanders until the whole world seems swallowed up in the maw of evil:

> "The night was filled with horrors, and he thought he knew how Christ must have felt as he walked through the world, like a psychiatrist through a ward of nuts, like a victim through a prison of thieves. . . . Mobs . . . mobs of policemen. . . . Mobs with clubs were in control everywhere."

Here, as the book leaves the war behind, it is finally apparent that Heller's comedy is his artistic response to his vision of transcendent evil, as if the escape route of laughter were the only recourse from a malignant world.

It is this world, which cannot be divided into boundaries or ideologies, that Yossarian has determined to resist. And so when his fear and disgust have reached the breaking point, he simply refuses to fly another mission. Asked by a superior what would happen if everybody felt the same way, Yossarian exercises his definitive logic, and answers, "Then I'd be a damned fool to feel any other way." Having concluded a separate peace, Yossarian maintains it in the face of derision, ostracism, psychological pressure, and the threat of court martial. When he is finally permitted to go home if he will only agree to a shabby deal whitewashing Colonel Cathcart, however, he finds himself impaled on two impossible alternatives. But his unique logic, helped along by the precedent of an even more logical friend, makes him conclude that desertion is the better part of valor; and so (after an inspirational sequence which is the weakest thing in the book) he takes off for neutral Sweden – the only place left in the world, outside of England, where "mobs with clubs" are not in control.

Yossarian's expedient is not very flattering to our national ideals, being defeatist, selfish, cowardly, and unheroic. On the other hand, it is one of those sublime expressions of anarchic individualism without which all national ideals are pretty hollow anyway. Since the mass State, whether totalitarian or democratic, has grown increasingly hostile to Falstaffian irresponsibility, Yossarian's anti-heroism is, in fact, a kind of inverted heroism which we would do well to ponder. For, contrary to the armchair pronouncements of patriotic ideologues, Yossarian's obsessive concern for survival makes him not only *not* morally dead, but one of the most morally vibrant figures in recent literature – and a giant of the will beside those weary, wise and wistful prodigals in contemporary novels who always accommodate sadly to American life. I believe that Joseph Heller is one of the most extraordinary talents now among us. He has Mailer's combustible radicalism without his passion for violence and self-glorification; he has Bellow's gusto with his compulsion to affirm the unaffirmable; and he has Salinger's wit without his coquettish self-consciousness. Finding his absolutes in the freedom to *be*, in a world dominated by cruelty, carnage, inhumanity, and a rage to destroy itself, Heller has come upon a new morality based on an old ideal, the morality of refusal. Perhaps – now that Catch-22 has found its most deadly nuclear form – we have reached the point where even the logic of survival is unworkable. But at least we can still contemplate the influence of its liberating honesty on a free, rebellious spirit in this explosive, bitter, subversive, brilliant book.

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Mr. Mencken's Guided Missiles

by Burling Lowrey

Normally the publication of about 400 letters out of a total of several thousand written by a prominent literary personage would not be considered an event of great importance. But H. L. Mencken was no ordinary correspondent. He actually did not write letters; he fired missiles – mostly short and pungent – in all directions nearly every day of his life. This particular collection, while limited largely in Mencken's literary activities, is likely to generate a considerable amount of excitement on many fronts for some time.

Letters of H. L. Mencken
Edited by Guy J. Forgue
(Knopf; $7.95)

Fortunately, the volume is resourcefully edited by Guy J. Forgue, a Frenchman and former associate of Henri Peyre at Yale. Avoiding the customary overzealousness of the young scholar in possession of a Pandora's box filled with literary gems, Mr. Forgue has made his footnotes succinct and limited them mainly to the name and occupation of Mencken's numerous correspondents. Transitions in time are properly filled in and in a few spots, but only on questions of heated controversy, he has included answers to the letters. The introduction by Hamilton Owens, former editor of *The Baltimore Sun* and a life-long friend of Mencken, is warmly yet not superficially anecdotal and full of intelligent observations about Mencken's active life as a disturber of the intellectual peace and man about Baltimore.

The letters themselves, which are masterpieces of succinctness and lucidity, add a new dimension to some of the well-worked-over controversies of the twenties and thirties – Comstockery, religious dogmatism, Victorian prudery, Babbittry – but they are of more interest in what they reveal about special literary activities such as the Mencken-Nathan editing of *The Smart Set* and *The American Mercury* (nowhere are the frustrations of attempting to edit a sophisticated magazine for "civilized adults" more thoroughly delineated) and the emergence of most of the literary giants of the twenties, particularly Theodore Dreiser. In addition, new questions are raised about Mencken's political conservatism and his literary radicalism.

The first half of the volume is dominated by letters to Theodore Dreiser, and here much new light is thrown upon one of the most fascinating friendships in American literary history. Mencken's attraction to Dreiser's brand of naturalism is honestly put forth, but it is not long before Henry's admiration for Dreiser's artistry comes into sharp conflict with his disgust over Theodore's naïveté toward professional radicals and what he considers his fuzzy, crackpotish philosophical ideas. The friendship seems to be at its warmest when Mencken is in the thick of the battle over the suppression of *The Genius*, and the letters on this subject have the tone of an understanding father explaining the ways of the world to an innocent and inexperienced son. But the tone suddenly shifts when Mencken learns that some of Dreiser's liberal friends have entered the fight, and in a letter to Ernest Boyd in 1916 he accuses Dreiser of playing the fool in hobnobbing with "Washington Square mountebanks." In the same letter he adds, "The old ass is ruining his case by his folly. These frauds flatter him and so make use of him." A 1920 letter to Burton Rascoe explains the conflict with typical Menckenian forthrightness:

> "We remained on good terms as long as I remained his inferior – a mere beater of drums for him. But when I began to work out notions of my own it quickly appeared that we were much unlike. Dreiser is a great artist, but a very ignorant and credulous man. . . . His heavy sentimentality and his naïve yearning to be a martyr make it impossible for me to take him seriously."

A seriocomic element enters the relationship in 1926 when Mencken, displaying surprisingly thin skin, becomes perturbed over the failure of Dreiser to send condolences upon the death of his (Mencken's) mother. Incredibly, over this incident, Mencken allows a nine-year hiatus in the correspondence and friendship to develop. In 1931 the obsession over Dreiser and the Liberals recurs. This time he is "taken in by Greenwich Village Bolsheviks" and "to see him would be like visiting an old friend who had gone insane, or had both legs cut off." Dreiser's playing footsie with the Stalinists in the early forties merely reaffirms an earlier conviction, and we find him writing to James T. Farrell in 1940:

> "The news that Dreiser has succumbed to the Stalinists is not surprising. The old boy is the most innocent idiot ever heard of. His political ideas are those of a child of seven, and he always succumbs to plausible quacks."

In between these exasperated outbursts, however, the warmth of the earlier stage of the friendship was revived and in one of his last letters on the subject – this one to Helen Dreiser in 1946 – he sums up in a mellow mood:

> "Eventually (after the nine-year hiatus), however we came together again, and in his later years we were very friendly. I could never, of course, follow him into his enthusiasm for such things as spiritualism, Communism and the balderdash of Charles Fort, but that never made any difference between us, for some of my ideas were just as obnoxious to him."

All in all, a relationship that for its contradictions and paradoxes should keep the literary historians and amateur psychoanalysts busy.

In the realm of literary activity, around which this volume is centered, Mencken was at his magnanimous best in encouraging writers who he was convinced possessed some incipient talent and in generously offering his advice on particular literary projects. When he was called upon, however, to explain *why* he liked a certain novel, story, or poem, certain blind spots in his critical equipment emerged, forcing him frequently into fallacious, if not ridiculous generalizations. Much could be said about Mencken's shortcomings as a literary critic, but in brief they were re-

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lated to an admitted lack of respect for aesthetic theory combined with a deeply ingrained philosophy of materialism, a conviction that objective reality is the only reality, a confirmed agnosticism, and an immovable political conservatism – all of which frequently distorted his judgment of books. The prime example of this is his claim that *Jennie Gerhardt*, certainly one of Dreiser's lesser efforts, is "the best American novel ever done, with the one exception of *Huckleberry Finn*" and his stubbornly insisting that Dreiser's greatest novel, *An American Tragedy*, is "a poor piece of work." Other faulty judgments include a rejection of *The Grapes of Wrath* on political grounds (full of pink hooey) and a sweeping dismissal of the plays of O'Neill. His comments on poetry are downright embarrassing.

More accurate than his abstract judgments are his capsule descriptions of writers themselves:

William Dean Howells – "a somewhat kittenish old maid – in brief a giggler."

Jack London – ". . . an ignorant and credulous man."

Ford Madox Ford – "grossly overestimated . . . a jackass."

William Lyon Phelps – "after all, there must be some ass to write books for women school-teachers, and so mellow their sad lives."

John Dewey – "the d u l l e s t writer heard of on earth since Apostolic times."

Carl Van Doren – "a capital fellow; very logical and yet full of human juices."

Equally as interesting is Mencken's relentless needling of liberals and radicals, no matter of what their shade. He was politically conservative his entire life ("It is hard for me to think in liberal terms. I grow more and more retionary as I grow older." – to Ernest Boyd, 1920), but as one gets deeper into the letters he realizes that Mencken's brand of reaction, while likely to be offensive in *degree* to those of opposing views, is certainly more palatable in *manner* than that of the current crop of nay-sayers. This is because he was (1) forthright and honest about being antidemocratic, and (2) had a sense of humor about both Tories and Liberals (at one time he was interested in editing a "Tory magazine with a sense of humor"). In contrast to the generation of conservatives which succeeded him, Mencken was never one to place snidely "so-called" before the word Liberal. Nor did he possess any of their malice. No matter how much one may question its underlying assumption, a statement

Memory of a Scholar

(W.A.O. 1880-1945)

by Richmond Lattimore

I set this down. Magister, can it be?
How shall I shape the wind that once was you?
Fancies seduce the memories in me.
This must be true, though nothing else were true.
I dared not praise you when you were alive.
Not I. You would have blown me off my feet
with stormy courtesy, the roar of wit
hiding the old Greek dread of godlike praise
for living men. But how shall verse contrive
your presence? Wave, my wand. So I recall
a Wilamowitz seen as Buffalo Bill,
Boeckh on a bicycle, and with it all
a better bibliographer by far
than any of your German idols. Now I see
the calligraphic hand, the blacksmith's bust,
the Civil War commander's brusque imperial,
the cavalry moustache, the chin upthrust,
the big bold pipe, the bolder black cigar,
the paleographer's fastidious eye.
You, my professor, you before my face
unrolled the script of scholars, put in place
Traube and Vahlen, Leo, Reitzenstein,
and set the stars for all our lives to steer them by.
Your force was schooled to skills, the leonine
turned lapidary; syntax and the line
at fault and needing surgery brought to bear
the steely grammar shaped in pain and care.
You mounted on minutiae to aspire
with Plato up the staircase of ideas
and ranged, a ruler, all his cloudy sky,
and came back down to his deep cave with light and heat
in worlds where men see dust and you saw fire,
to blow your edicts from your chair at ease,
Jupiter of the seminar benign
with poets nuns and Baptists sitting at your feet.

It was the river. Far away and late
I heard the story of the overturned canoe,
your call, "go help the others," and the great heart stayed
in death. Think of that country that we knew
so well, land of black woods and trailing vines
and inland muddy streams that held your fate,
the Pollywogs, the flooded Danville mines,
Sangamon and Vermilion and Salt Fork,
our professorial playground. How we played
beside the crawfish-catfish-haunted Lethe stream
through overall-and-gallus groves of Academe.
Sulphured for chiggers, through the green opaque
fills of the scoops we swam, and dried in air,
played softball in cow-pastures, fried our steak,
stood by the fire and rocked the night with corny song
and shone the moon with outlaw rye and legal beer.
And now you are gone out of a world gone wrong.
Spirit in storm. You can not catch and keep it near.
Verse will not hold you fixed. The river took
you, and your spirit on the plains
will shout with the old laughter over all my pains
to put a man alive inside a book.
End from an epitaph you turned me to:
the tribute to a Roman Spanish charioteer:
Now pour the wine. Your friends and flowers are here.
Never forget. For there was none like you.

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like "I do not believe that civilized lif is possible under a democracy" comes as a refreshing breeze in comparison to the stale verbiage of a Goldwater television interview.

Still the question remains, how far to the Right did Mencken go in his lifetime. These letters do not provide ready answers, but they fan some dying fires. It is even likely that the debate over Mencken's alleged racism, which was conducted in *The New Republic* and *London Times Literary Supplement* in 1957 and 1958 may be revived. Certainly, there is much Jew-baiting especially in the letters of the twenties, as well as snide references to "coons" and "cannibals"; and it is hard to see how his persistent conviction that "criticism" against Jews and Negroes should not be suppressed is anything but an ill-concealed admission of racial bias. The extent to which the liquidation of the Jews under Hitler altered his racial views is something worth exploring. In a 1935 letter to Benjamin De Casseres he says, "My belief, often expressed, is that the Jews probably deserve their troubles, but if you ask me to say categorically *why* they deserve them I can't answer you." But a statement to Hamilton Owens suggests that Mencken was shaken and sobered by public reaction to his negative views concerning America's entry in World War II and the accusations of pro-Nazism and anti-Semitism. Owen's discussion of this episode in Mencken's life is worth reading.

In an introductory note, Mr. Forgue points out that in addition to selecting the best of Mencken's literary letters he selected "a number of others that best express his *personality*." (Italics Forgue's.) Perhaps Mr. Forgue should have qualified his statement by explaining *which* personality. For those who met Mencken personally were always struck by the contrast in the personality which comes so strongly in the writing and that displayed in relaxed moments away from the desk. The first Mencken was aggressive, vituperative, frequently insulting, and brilliantly incisive in attacking folly – especially the American kind. The second Mencken was kind, thoughtful, gracious, a gregarious fellow. The letters convey the first Mencken in abundance, little of the second. And as much as one is awed by the lucidity of the thought and the dynamism of the language one begins eventually to feel the kind of exhaustion which overtakes one who has been overexposed to an excessively witty man and longs for something really heartfelt – perhaps along the lines of Thomas Wolfe's parting letter to Maxwell Perkins. But it never comes. Only two statements in the volume even suggest the stirrings of an emotion. The first is from a letter to Ellery Sedgwick concerning his reaction to the anti-German hysteria of World War I:

> "Once it (the war) is over, I'll be glad to write for you, if you dare me, a frank statement of the experiences and sensations of an American of German blood, facing for a year or more the ecstatic Germanophobia of the rest of the population. It has been a curious time and I think it has changed me a lot."

"I think it has changed me a lot" does, at least in its undertone, suggest a deep hurt that characteristically was never to be revealed. In another letter to Sedgwick on the death of Mencken's wife, he says, "My marriage lasted less than five years, but was a beautiful adventure while it lasted. Now I feel completely dashed and dismayed." In spite of the genuineness of the statement, its terseness leaves one who is accustomed to the intimacy and self-revelation of most literary correspondence a trifle chilled.

While the total intellectual impact of this volume of letters is powerful, what comes through more strongly than anything else is the tremendous vitality of Mencken's utterances, the manly vigor of his style. As far back as 1909 he wrote to Willard Huntington Wright, "You have here got into English the thing that Nietzsche got into German – a loud heartbeat, an assertive clang." An assertive clang! How perfectly these three words sum up the quality of Mencken's magnificent style! And what a clear reminder they are to a generation of Americans nurtured on Eisenhowese, Madison Av-ese, and Pedagogese how far our language has moved in the direction of feminization and blandness. A required course in *Menckenese* for all college freshmen in the United States might spare us from being engulfed by the Martians of vagueness, verbal passivity, and fractured syntax.

A Voice Crying in the South

by Honor Tracy

Miss Carson McCullers breaks her long silence with a tale of passion and misery and evil in a small Southern town. The scene of *Clock Without Hands* is Milan, where violence between white and black is never far below the surface and rises like a monstrous growth with the mounting heat of summer.

Clock Without Hands
by Carson McCullers
(Houghton Mifflin; $4)

Two unequal groups live uneasily side by side, the dominant one resolved to stay where it is, the other nervously and resentfully thrusting upward when it dares. If provocation occurs, brutality drags the white community with it like a runaway horse. Nobody will go against the current, because to be thought a chicken is more alarming than to be a murderer and because in a small interdependent community there is the hazard of boycott and ruin.

The victim here is Sherman, a boy of mixed birth, black-skinned but with blue eyes inherited from the mother. Only by chance does he learn the facts of his birth, prior to which he has indulged in all manner of highflown surmises and naturally enough is uppish as a result. He is also insanely conceited, vindictive and a fantastic liar. As the base are wont to do, he keeps his special cruelties for those who love and trust him: he revels in hurting Jester, the adolescent grandson of Judge Clane and his best friend, and hangs the boy's pet dog out of wanton spite. Employed in a position of confidence by the senile Judge, he returns the kindness by substituting water for insulin in the old man's injections.

Just as the white men feel justified in their acts, so does he. His excuse for

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every outrage is the treatment of his race, which makes him free and even bound to do whatever his nature inclines him. To be despicable as an individual worries him not at all, to belong to a despised race he cannot endure. In time he begins making small gestures of defiance: he sits at a white counter, he uses a white cloakroom, he attends a white church. People either take no notice or briefly admonish him, whereat he backs down, for he is a coward in the bargain. Then one day, poking about in the Judge's personal files, he finds out that he is the son of a white woman and a Negro condemned to death by Clane for murdering the woman's husband. In a megalomaniac frenzy he rents a flat in a white house, buys furniture and a piano and a Nile-green silk suit, and moves in.

A group of men assemble in the pharmacy of J. T. Malone under the presidency of Judge Clane, an upholder of slavery and former Klansman as well as a gorgeous old mess. The judge is so utterly gaga by now that his emotions, ideas and impulses skip on over the place like mercury and one can never guess what his next remark will be or if it will have any relevance at all. In his final, deliciously funny scene he is trying to give a rabble-rouser over the radio but manages only to recite Lincoln's famous address, the first he ever got by heart, interspersed with asides to his dumbfounded supporters in the studio to quit poking him.

On this occasion he opens with a wild complaint about the shortage and cost of servants but then, sensing a lack of response, switches to color. Having treated Sherman almost as a son, he bawls at the meeting, "Who is running this town, us or the niggers?" It is a question not of what to do but of who shall do it and a ballot is taken. Malone draws the X that appoints him the bomber of Sherman and the house, and he refuses. He has only a month or two to live: his gradual physical decay is an important theme of the novel and this moment of courage appears intended as its climax. One of the poor whites present spits on the floor and calls him Chicken, volunteering to do the deed in his place. Sherman is bombed and killed, wearing his fine green silk and pounding his piano. Next day "uneasy and nostalgic, the softhearted, soft-brained old Judge" goes to the morgue and leaves $500 for the funeral.

The novel abounds in detail of brilliance or beauty, as need hardly be said, but we have to consider it on Miss McCullers' own magnificent level and there are weaknesses of structure and conception. Malone's anguished attendance on death is described with immense compassion and understanding but the very fact that he is dying takes from the force of his revolt. If a middle-aged family man, a small trader in a small town, had defied the herd and borne the pain of separation from it as a matter of conscience, the act would have been noble. But Malone blurts out that he is dying and does not want to endanger his soul, he is simply more afraid of the Almighty than of the present company.

Again, in this reviewer's opinion, it was a mistake for the halfbreed to be so repellent. Sherman's death leaves us as cold as the sticky end of the villain in a melodrama, for there is nothing in him at all to engage our sympathy. Miss McCullers may have intended to insist that murder is always murder and never to be condoned, a point so morally and legally sound as to verge on the trite. Or it may be that she was exonerating him, as he exonerates himself, telling us "there you are, this is your doing, you made him," an attitude which strikes me as facile and, fundamentally, contemptuous. Or, perhaps, I have missed the point altogether.

Racial conflict is bound to engross a Southern writer of any feeling, but in dealing with it Miss McCullers has not shown her usual imaginative depth. The Constitution is better left to the journalists and the Gettysburg address won't do, for a fallacy is a fallacy is a fallacy, no matter who dedicates himself to it. There is, to be candid, just a touch of the commonplace now and again in this book, and a disturbing hint of euphoria. One chapter begins, "Since livingness is made up of countless daily miracles . . ." which is pure whimsy; and that deplorable "livingness" is repeated over and over again, and even flaunted on the jacket. Professors on both sides of the Atlantic are quite well able to ruin the language without the help of major novelists.

Nightmare in Mexico

by Daniel M. Friedenberg

The effect of the industrial age on art has always fascinated thinkers with an eye to the future. The invention of the camera destroyed classic painting in a matter of decades. Under the impact of plastics, sculpture is changing. And avant-garde proponents of poetry and music claim that the cacophony of urban life has created a new juxtaposition of machine sounds that renders obsolete the older forms.

The Children of Sánchez
by Oscar Lewis
(Random House; $6)

A faint hint of the future of the novel is foreshadowed by *The Children of Sánchez*, a remarkable study of a poor family in Mexico City. Oscar Lewis, the American author and a trained anthropologist, has introduced a revolutionary approach to trap the immediacy of impressions. Using the tape recorder in place of incomplete or sentimentalized memory, he may have blazed a new trail for what the 19th Century called naturalism and the 20th Century Joyceanism.

Gaining the confidence of a poor Mexican family of five, the father Jesús Sánchez, his two sons, Manuel and Roberto, and two daughters, Consuelo and Marta, Lewis taped over many sessions the raw material of their lives. Eliminating the questions, he then integrated the dialogues into a series of stories. The result is what he calls "an autobiography of a Mexican family," fascinating and terrifying.

This is "proletarian literature" with a vengeance, autobiography of the poor as no ordinary native white American can imagine the poor, the scream of millions in the underdeveloped countries made loud with bedbugs, rats, sickness, violence and that despair which is galvanizing whole nations to

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throw off the past embark on a new path, any new path, to escape. To know the Sánchez family is to understand the Fidel Castros, Sekou Tourés and Sukarnos in a way no headlines can convey. For some short frightful hours, we live with the "over a billion people in seventy-five nations of Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Near East [that] have an average per capita income of less than $200 a year as compared with over $2,000 a year for the US" as the author soberly points out: and the image is so sharp, so strident, that we can never quite see the world the same again if we have more than a grain of compassion.

And what is this world of the Sánchez family, this typical group of poor workers residing ten minutes from downtown Mexico City?

Imagine eight, ten, fifteen, even twenty persons in a windowless room: parents, children, grandchildren, aunts, uncles, nephews, heaped together, sleeping sideways on the bed or the bare concrete floor. The odors and filth are those of an animal lair. The mere problems of dressing and undressing, of personal ablutions, become major crises. Parents must leave home to enter cheap hotels for personal intimacy; and the expense soon turns love into furtive copulation spied on by the young, who convert "playing mamá and papá" into real imitation at the start of puberty. Their experiments make new babies, who are propelled into the universe to repeat the hopeless drama of the hungry and uneducated.

Men in taverns half the night, having affairs with several women and drunkenly beating their mates at home while the children call for help. Women try to escape into the peace of the convent but cannot enter for lack of that rare paper – proof their parents were married. The weekend ritual of delousing. Rats crawling over infants frozen with horror. Stomach disorders due to the fried foods and cheap chile dishes. Tuberculosis eating its way into the lungs of the young in the dank room. Men gambling away the little money they make in desperate hope of sudden riches. Sex, and more sex, leading to family rupture, litters of unwanted children and murder.

Prisons, packed with homosexuals and dope fiends plying their trades, supervised by sadistic police, "the best system of organized gangsters in the world." Daily beatings with no relation to guilt. Submersion in water and resubmersion before the breath can be caught. Shocking of the male genitals to produce "confessions." Corruption and infinite corruption the only way out.

So grinding a picture of poverty, wasted lives and death turns the emotions to stone in self-defense. At bottom we all want to believe life has a meaning that makes suffering endurable. But this story strips us of all such refuge. Only a pittance of dignity remains, and this is often blasted by hunger and ill health. We turn from this nightmare; and as we turn, we remember that these millions are of like flesh; they crave meaning; they thirst for some doctrine that will give hope. If the Sánchez family is typical, it cannot be the Church, which they know too well, nor the mixed feudal and capitalist order under which they drag out their existence: so the charismatic word Socialism, the evangelic message of our age, stands waiting.

It is apparent that a certain element of prejudice, conscious or unconscious, has gone both into the choice of these particular Mexicans and the selection of their attitudes. The tape recorder takes down conversations but the tapist leads the interview into certain avenues; and the very process of making this raw material into art implies a deliberate selectivity. Oscar Lewis himself states in the introduction that people similar to the Sánchez family compose a minority of the population of Mexico City. The diligent and persevering can and do rise in Mexico today, where the Revolution has at least shattered the feudal caste system. Those who stuck to their studies with an iron will and an iron ambition did succeed in creating small businesses or becoming skilled mechanics. The Church still has profound resources and deep roots. And the family unit stands like rock: the home in the old sense as a place where one can go when no one else will take you.

But such alienation as Lewis describes of a large part of the population can not and will not endure. The Sánchez family of Mexico City shows the trend; the father accepts. The children rebel. The rebellion is in drink, sex and crime now. Next it will be revolution.

Stories: New, Old, and Sometimes Good

by Irving Howe

William Carlos Williams is by now so deservedly honored an American writer, there can be little harm or impudence in suggesting that his poetry has been somewhat overrated. Except in a few great poems like "The Yachts," he does not command a very interesting, certainly not very supple mind; and in lyric verse the quality of the writer's mind reveals itself more forcibly – since there is no mediating agent or fable – than in realistic fiction.

The Farmers' Daughters
by William Carlos Williams
(New Directions; cloth, $4.50, paper, $1.95)
The Spinoza of Market Street
by Isaac Bashevis Singer
(Farrar, Strauss & Cudahy; $3.95)
Tell Me a Riddle
by Tillie Olson
(Lippincott; $1.65)
The Games of Night
by Stig Dagerman
(Lippincott; $1.65)

Williams has a gift for carving miniatures of daily life with such sympathetic precision that they seem to take on an aura of value beyond the limits of what he says or shows. But let him try, as in his long poem "Paterson," to employ more complex structures, and the result is often a kind of sentimental incoherence. He can make the phenomenal world seem wonderfully fresh, as if the act of naming were renewed each day, but when he needs to relate that world to human consciousness he tends to become a romantic simplifier. He resorts to cries of delight and other "elemental" responses which, like all willed simplicities, soon come to appear extremely contrived.

Now one might suppose that weaknesses of this kind would be especially glaring in his fiction, and indeed I

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remembered his stories as honest flat and grey, mere slabs of reportage about the miseries of life in northern New Jersey. But in reading this collection of 52 Williams stories I have found myself repeatedly surprised to discover how good they now seem. The book is too large, of course: had it been kept down to 15 or 18 stories it would have been truly first-rate. As it is, one must pick and choose, stumbling on such gems as "The Use of Force," "Jean Beicke," and "Old Doc Rivers."

The stories weave into one another, not through a recurrence of theme, character and incident, but through the steadying presence of Dr. Williams himself, a figure notably different from and usually more interesting than William Carlos Williams the *avant garde* poet. Almost all the stories are set in the Paterson-Rutherford area, one of the bleakest in the country, but while Williams sees its ugliness and renders its outrage to eye, nose and ear, he does not shrink from it. Rough, busy and impatient, he moves through his world with the assurance of a man who knows he is of some *use*, and perhaps it is that knowledge which enables him to care genuinely for human beings. He has no illusions, he harries the malingerers – for there is another patient always waiting; but his heart remains open and unsullied, responsive to the wailings of a slum brat or the groans of an old lush.

Williams listens to people. Apparently he believes his responsibility as a doctor involves letting them talk themselves out; besides, he enjoys it, knowing how to appreciate a sudden encounter or conversation; and what they tell him often forms the matter, or at least the impetus, of his stories. His world is one of the few in modern literature where people still connect with one another, and if for no other reason that would make his stories notable. Believing in his work and aware that he does it well, Williams is proud, even pleased with himself. And precisely there, I think, lies the secret of his power as a story-teller: precisely in that innocent and unashamed vanity of his, which braces and tightens the stories, leading them back to such themes as the psychic content made possible by necessary work and the relaxed self made possible through immersion in a public role. How pleasant it is to move through these grim stories with a man who sees no reason to look upon his life with nausea or contempt, and whose readiness for experience opens him to the possibilities of affection. And in the stories all this comes through as it hardly can in the poetry, for what matters in Williams' fiction is not so much the narrowness of his private sensibility as the positive strength of his public role.

Most of the stories are loosely constructed, beginning at whatever point Williams' interest in a character happens to strike fire and ending when he turns away to other patients. Even when there is a plot, it is ramshackle, though not with the calculated artlessness of an Anderson or Hemingway, for most of the stories are episodes along the Williams way, segments of his time and experience. As Philip Rahv observed some time ago: "What Williams tells us is much too close to him to lend itself to the alienation of design; none of his perceptions can be communicated through the agency of invented equivalents. The phenomena he observes and their meanings are so intimately involved with one another . . .that formal means of expression would not only be superfluous but might actually nullify the incentive to creation."

Yet the stories do have their own kind of aesthetic unity. If ever I have been persuaded of the validity of "organic form" as a critical notion – the form that is said to proceed not from executive techniques but from an inner harmony or consistency of feeling – it is in reading these stories. What holds them together is the presence of Williams himself, not always a likeable man but usually vibrant with energy and purpose. Indifferent to the formulas of modern criticism, he has no concern to establish "ironic distance" between himself and his world: he speaks out directly both to the readers and the characters within his stories, for in part his stories are versions of the conversations that have filled his life. And at times such passages of direct statement can be very moving, as in his reflections about getting up in the early hours of the morning to visit a patient:

> "These are the great neglected hours of the day, the only time when the world is relatively perfect and at peace But terror guards them. Once I am up, however, and out it's rather a delight, no matter what the weather, to be abroad in the thoughtful dawn."

What one feels at the end is the appropriateness of Williams himself, doctor listener and story-teller, a man who has found pleasure and fulfillment in useful work. For the present moment in American experience there could hardly be a more vital or disturbing image.

The latest book by Isaac Bashevis Singer raises a difficult problem in criticism, and I should like to be candid in facing it. Singer is probably the most brilliant, though far from the most characteristic, living writer of Yiddish prose. Devoted as he is to the grotesque, the erotic, the demonic and the quasi-mystical, he is something of a sport in the communal tradition of Yiddish writing. Simply in terms of native talent – by which I mean his capacity for winning our quick and total assent to the bizarre world of his fictions – there cannot be a dozen living writers

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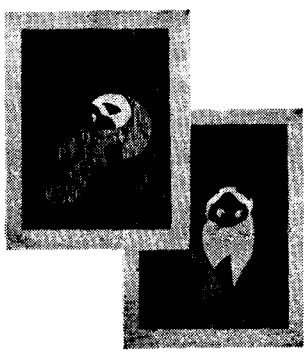

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in any language as fortunate as he. Yet after reading his work over the past seven or eight years in both Yiddish and English translation, I find myself uneasy. I remain under his spell, admire his virtuosity, respond to his cast of imps and devils, but fail to see any principle of growth in his work. Singer seems almost perfect within his stringent limits, but it is a perfection of stasis: he plays the same tune over and over again, and with a self-confidence that is awesome he keeps modelling his work largely on . . . his own work.

As if to anticipate this point, Singer's American publishers write about *The Spinoza of Market Street* that it "contains several stories that represent a new development in Singer's work . . . that epic realism which the author first used in his vast chronicle novel *The Family Moskat*, a style which until now has rarely been that of his shorter fiction." Perhaps; one or two stories in this new book do give some support to this statement. But it should also be said that *The Family Moskat* is not a successful novel: Singer is as alien to the world of realism as most writers to his world of grotesquerie. The title story of his new book does indeed turn upon ordinary life – that of a rationalist Jewish scholar in war-time Poland who, after decades of barren philosophizing, finds a taste of paradise by marrying an old crone. But Singer's treatment, while it begins with realism, keeps steadily edging away from it. The power of this fine story depends, almost as much as in his direct engagements with the grotesque, upon his taste for strangeness and his gift for yoking together a number of discordant tones: the mundane and exalted, the lyrical and perverse, the transcendent and demonic.

Within his narrow limits Singer is a genius. He has total command of his imagined world; he is original in his use both of traditional Jewish materials and his modernist attitude toward them; he provides a serious if enigmatic moral perspective; and he writes Yiddish prose with a rhythmic and verbal brilliance that, to my knowledge, can hardly be matched. When Eliezer Greenberg and I were working on our *Treasury of Yiddish Stories*, he read aloud to me, with a fluency and pith I could never capture in my own reading of Yiddish, Singer's great story "Gimpel the Fool." I knew immediately – it took no special powers of judgment! – that here was the work of an original master, for the story came with all the shock of revelation that one experiences upon a first reading of Babel or Kleist. Then, when Saul Bellow did his marvelous translation of "Gimpel," he captured, as no other translator has, the nervous plasticity and strength of Singer's style.

Yet, Singer seems to be mired in his own originality. There are times, as in some of the lesser stories in *The Spinoza of Market Street*, when he displays a weakness for self-imitation that is disconcerting. Second-rate writers imitate others, first-rate writers themselves, and it is not always clear which is the more dangerous.

Still, can one regard the absence of "development" as a legitimate critical judgment? Is the criterion of "growth" one that can be properly applied to a writer who has mastered his chosen form and keeps producing work often distinguished and always worthy of attention? For if Singer moves along predictable lines, they are clearly his own, and no one can accomplish his kind of story nearly so well as he.

Tillie Olson is a woman in her forties who has raised a family and then returned to her earlier ambition to write short stories. It is a common pattern these days in the life of the American middle class, though seldom do the results so thoroughly justify the risks. About Mrs. Olson one is not inclined to say, as might have been said about Bernard Malamud or Philip Roth on their first appearance, that here, no matter what comes of it, is a rich outpouring of talent. Mrs Olson's stories depend heavily on her own experience, and that experience seems to be narrow. But, to judge from the stories, it is also one that she has felt very deeply and pondered and imaginatively absorbed. The one remarkable story in her book, "Tell Me a Riddle," is a *tour de force* which pits aging and dying immigrant Jews against their native-born children, prosperous, troubled and helpless. Mrs. Olson treats this familiar subject with balance, a cool humaneness, as if she were trying to see through the eyes of both generations and accept the self-pity of neither.

The aging Jewish couple, now living in bored retirement and feeding on each other's resentments, are quasi-intellectuals of a kind familiar to anyone who has moved through the Jewish trade unions or communal organizations. They trundle from one child to another, waiting for death, tormenting each other, until the wife is stricken with cancer and they must spend her few remaining months on a California seashore, lost in an America they neither made nor understand. The squalor of the setting is matched by the misery of their decline. And then comes the brilliant stroke of the story, a piece of imaginative daring absolutely true to the nature of such lives: the dying woman, her mind and tongue loosened, turns away from the petty family concerns of her old age and floats back into the past, into the days of her revolutionary ardor in Czarist Russia, and old phrases from speeches on socialism and Tolstoyan humanitarianism come streaming out of her, first to shock her husband and then to stir him into the pain of remembered love.

Mrs. Olson writes with steady hardness of tone, clinging to the one perception – the perception of loss and forgetting – which controls her story. In some passages she presses too hard, trying for verbal effects, intensities upon intensities, she cannot quite control, and not allowing her fable to move freely on its own. Nevertheless, the story is a remarkable piece of work, and one can only hope that Mrs. Olson, having been possessed by the powers of memory, may now move ahead to fiction in which everything depends on the powers of invention.

The stories of the Swedish writer Stig Dagerman I found more noteworthy than, on a strict literary accounting, they may deserve. Dagerman was a precocious novelist who turned out an enormous quantity of work in his early twenties and then suffered from a terrible writer's block. According to an introduction by Michael Meyer, this block overwhelmed Dagerman at precisely the time he was happily in love: so there can be no easy personal explanation. Dagerman tried several times to take his life and in 1954, at the age of 31, finally succeeded. He had been editor of a left-wing paper and associated with a group of experimentalist writers, but neither fact points to what

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is original in his talent. Most of the stories in this collection do not entirely come off, and a few are finger exercises that should not have been published at all, yet one feels that if he had lived, Dagerman would have been an important writer.

His best stories are set in that hard region north of Stockholm which forms a permanent place of the imagination to anyone brought up on the Scandinavian novels that were in fashion 25 years ago. Some of the stories are *genre* pieces of Swedish rural life as seen through the eyes of a lonely boy, and while Dagerman must finally be described as an urban and sophisticated writer, he retained the ability to recall the sensuous elements of his boyhood on a provincial farm, evoking a remembrance of the past that is pictorially strong and objective.

He did not, however, remain content with such limited purposes. In several of the stories one is struck by a sudden nervous tremor, a plunge into distraught reflection which the subject does not quite warrant but which is a sign of his straining to move beyond the material he had already subdued. That straining, I would guess, was toward a confrontation of nihilism, the glacial emptiness of soul behind the thickness of the farms and the men. Dagerman located this nihilism not among intellectuals or criminals, as is the fashion in modern writing, but among ordinary men and even children as they suffer a dizzying sense of the bottomlessness of experience, the terror of the meaningless as it strikes an unprepared imagination. In no single story does Dagerman fully realize this theme, or beginnings of a theme, yet in his sensibility, if not his subjects, he shared that absorption with the void which is a distinguishing mark of so many writers who began to publish after the Second World War. And this may explain the curious tone of his best passages, a mixture of blandness and ferocity, as if to register how the security of appearances can melt into the fright of nothing, and the familiar world of grandfather's farm into the questionings of the Stockholm intelligentsia.

Our Last Best Hope of Peace

by Charles G. Bolte

This is Benjamin V. Cohen of Corcoran & Cohen, the Glass kids of the early New Deal. Having helped rehabilitate the nation domestically in the thirties, he has devoted himself in recent years to helping it domesticate itself to the wide, wide world of the fifties and sixties. The second task is proving itself more difficult than the first: but then, the materials are more recalcitrant, both abroad, where the objective conditions are violent, and at home, where the views of world politics are under-developed.

The United Nations, Constitutional Developments, Growth, and Possibilities
by Benjamin V. Cohen
(Harvard; $2.75)

Mr. Cohen knows both these worlds intimately. During the Truman years he represented this country officially, and with great distinction, as Counselor of the State Department, US delegate to the General Assembly, US representative at the International Court, and chief US member of the UN Disarmament Commission. Since then he has worked behind the scenes as an advisor to Democratic presidential aspirants and as a member of the Democratic Advisory Council. He sums up his experiences, his wisdom, and his hopes about the United Nations and our role in it in this short, lucid, and pithy book, originally delivered at the Harvard Law School as the Oliver Wendell Holmes Lectures for 1961.

The lectures were, in fact and with fine irony, delivered during the week of the Cuban invasion. Their argument is summarized in the foreword:

> "Months earlier I chose the United Nations as the subject of the lectures because I felt that amid professions of faith in the Charter there has been in recent years a percep-

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tible decline in the use of the United Nations for the peaceful settlement or containment of international conflicts. The Great Powers seem content to use the United Nations as a diplomatic weapon in the Cold War, avoiding its use as an instrument to aid in the finding of peaceful solutions or accommodations. There are, to be sure, reasons accounting for these adverse developments – ideological differences between the East and the West and marked contrasts in social and economic conditions between the North and the South. But if the growing tendency of the Great Powers to downgrade the United Nations is not arrested and reversed, we may lose our last best hope of peace on earth."

The lectures succeed in their stated objective. Mr. Cohen, audacious fellow, takes the words of all our post-war Presidents at their face value, and writes as if we really should make the UN "the cornerstone of US foreign policy." More audacious still, he argues for using the UN as an instrument for ending the cold war rather than for winning it. He seems to believe that it might be possible, given wisdom, patience, and imagination, to find some common ground with the Russians; at least, he says that an effort in this direction would be preferable to war.

All these thoughts, so subversive of much received doctrine today, are presented in the cool, detached, analytical tones of a man addressing the Harvard Law School. The legal arguments are closely-reasoned, somewhat technical, and occasionally boring. Thus he begins by reviewing "Charter Power: The Competence of United Nations Organs Under the Charter"; and makes a persuasive case for a broad interpretation of the Charter, as an instrument which, like the US Constitution, "created an organism capable of life and growth." He therefore approves the use of the General Assembly in the security field when the Security Council is deadlocked; argues against the restrictive interpretations of Article 2, paragraph 7 (intervention in domestic jurisdiction); supports the enlargement of the Secretary-General's role (*à la* Congo); and urges that agreements reached outside the UN (*e.g.*, on disarmament) be referred to UN organs for supervision and enforcement.

If this organism is to grow as it should, Mr. Cohen argues in his second chapter, members must assume their responsibilities under the Charter, not just exercise their privileges. He does not take the simplistic view sometimes urged by uncritical friends of the UN that all disputes and situations should be turned over to the UN: he knows that the UN is a collection of sovereign states, and that you don't go there with a problem unless you have a notion of how the UN can usefully deal with it (although in practice it sometimes seems that states take problems to the UN only when they don't have a clue themselves). "The existence of jurisdiction," says Mr. Cohen in a Holmesian sentence, "does not make mandatory its exercise."

Mr. Cohen goes on to reflect on "what might be done to strengthen the United Nations and humanity's hope for survival." He takes the chief argument *against* reliance on the UN – that the cold war and the arms race make it useless in the Great-Power struggle – stands it on its head, and makes it into his chief argument *for* the creative use of the UN – as the locale for developing "the recognition and consciousness of the common interest in peace of all nations." Specifically, he proposes high-level conferences at the UN to develop agreements on an end to nuclear testing, arms control, and outer space; on the rules and conditions of peaceful coexistence; and on the handling of currently irreconcilable disputes between the Great Powers (he suggests a cooling-off period).

Reading this book in the month of Hammarskjold's death, of fighting in the Congo against the UN itself, of Berlin en-fused, and of the renewal of nuclear testing, is a faintly eery, almost an antiquarian, experience. The tone is so reasonable, the proposals so sensible, the aim so modestly stated, "Utopia" so firmly avoided: and the initial effect is of a dulcimer in a hurricane. This century, so addicted to violence, surely is not the century for Mr. Cohen. One imagines Joe Alsop saying "soft-boiled," Mr. Luce denouncing the subversion of his efforts to win the cold war, a Kennedy staffer murmuring, "Alas, there are no Ben Cohens in the Kremlin." Even this sympathetic reader found himself recalling the story about the country preacher asked by his flock to pray for rain to end the drought; looking at the sky, he said, "I'm not going to bother the Almighty with prayers for rain as long as the wind's in this quarter."

And yet, the finest art in sailing is to use the wind to go against the wind. Mr. Cohen knows which way the wind is blowing, and how strong a gale it is. He merely proposes that we keep tacking into it, rather than running before it into a "mutually suicidal" war. He admits that the effort to reach a working consensus with our antagonists may fail: "But I for one am unwilling to abandon hope in reason. These are matters in which we have a common interest to find agreement. We should not be discouraged if our appeals . . . do not evoke immediate response."

Such words might become an epitaph. But it would be an epitaph more suitable for a brave and free people than some others now being suggested.

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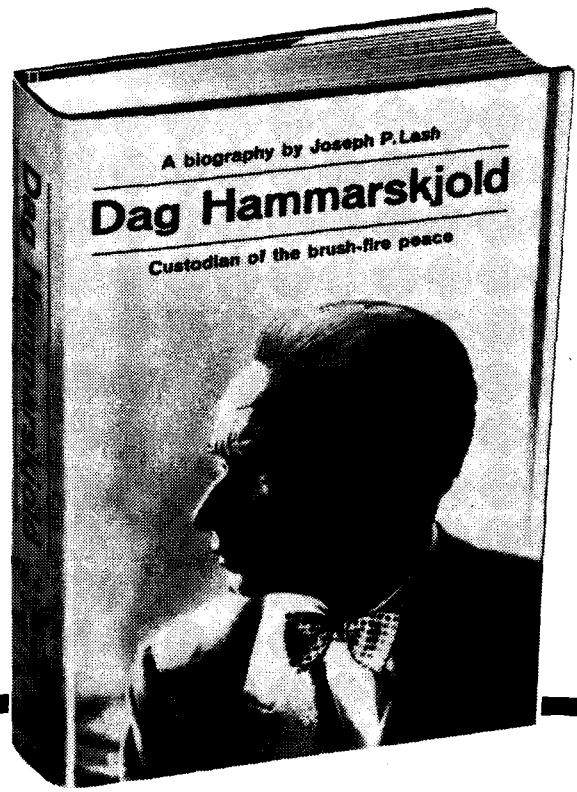

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The Delusion of Reality

by Victor Lange

The affluence and variety of Austrian fiction, its intelligence and its self-irony, are once more confirmed by Heimito von Doderer's enormous novel, *The Demons*. In Germany Doderer is widely regarded as a somewhat old-fashioned, undisciplined and effusive writer: his first major novel, *Die Strudelhofstiege* (1951) was so intensely preoccupied with the Viennese scene, its intellectual flavor and the subtleties of its social ambience, that it was bound to seem provincial and eccentric. But from a more detached point of view it is clear that Doderer's setting has symbolic possibilities no less compelling than the world of analytical "Viennese" fiction from Schnitzler to Broch and Musil. Doderer is in this tradition not perhaps the most important or original figure, but undoubtedly the most exuberant and satisfying. *The Demons* is his grandest novel: written over a period of some 25 years and published in Germany in 1957, it is clearly the work of a most thoughtful artist and an incomparably lively, imaginative and thoroughly contemporary mind.

The Demons
by Heimito von Doderer
translated by
Richard and Clara Winston
(Knopf; $13.50)

Doderer was born in 1896, served in both world wars, devoted himself to historical studies, and published a volume of poems in 1923. His first novel, an account of his experiences as a prisoner of war in Russia, appeared in 1930. *A Murder Everyone Commits* (1938), suggests his skill in contriving a detective story as well as his preoccupation with the problem of the discovery of self – a theme resumed in another story: *The Lighted Windows, or The Humanization of Councilor Zibal* (1951).

Die Strudelhofstiege and *The Demons* are closely related in the time and place of their setting and in their intellectual purpose; the action of the first takes place in Vienna just before and just after the First World War, that of *The Demons* from the fall of 1926 to the summer of 1927.

The Demons is the chronicle of several interrelated groups of Viennese whose fortunes are observed and narrated by a retired civil servant, Herr von Geyrenhoff, and whose main representatives are drawn together in a series of events that bring them into a sharp focus of self-recognition and self-realization. The variety of these figures and of their orbits of action is astounding: there are nearly forty principal characters, men and women of social eminence, diplomats, revolutionaries, bankers, veterans, journalists, scholars and artists, as well as a wonderful assortment of underworld characters, murderers, prostitutes and pick-pockets. But these fascinating figures are not individually the agents of action; their careers meet on two or three common concerns, their backgrounds and situations are revealed step by step in a constant interplay of particular observations and events. Doderer is primarily concerned with the meticulous rendering of a kaleidoscopic network of human beings and their relationships, with the stalking of individuals and the gradual fixing of their elusive selves in a series of seemingly haphazard but, in fact, carefully managed incidents within a tightly woven plot. The narrative moves in countless eddies in the ineluctable flow of the mainstream of historical consciousness, that are watched for brief moments, sometimes touching one another and occasionally overlapping. Thus, the same event is often recorded from several points of view. The climax of the novel, which is related less to the palpable action than to the theme of the book, is the great fire of the Vienna Palace of Justice in the summer of 1927, a holocaust which Doderer seems to suggest may well have destroyed the possibilities of individual responsibility and self-scrutiny.

Doderer's narrative technique is, in turn, determined by his conviction that life in its overwhelming abundance and its wealth of associations and perspectives cannot be grasped from a single, fixed view. Herr von Geyrenhoff is the cautious and reserved observer and reporter who patiently awaits the emerging constellation of the life about him, and who, in the slow monologue of his telling the story, learns to accept the great lesson of the book itself. For him this is summed up in the paradoxically phrased injunction: write first and then live – an experience of maturing which nearly all characters in *The Demons* are made to undergo. In one context or another, each finds himself confronted by a sudden epiphany of truth, freed of the deceptive props that have blinded him to the realities of his life. It is the stubborn and often fascinating but ultimately fatal delusions as to the true character of the world in which the self must realize itself, these "second realities," that are the "demons" of Doderer's extraordinary epic.

The variety of these "second realities" gives to the novel its remarkable breadth and density: it may be a criminal and villainous scheme which is slowly unravelled, or the recognition of a false ambition, or the gradual discovery that under the pressure of the actualities of life, thought and feeling, ideals and attitudes turn out to be mere obsessions, unexamined habits of mind, pseudo-philosophies or ideologies. The roads to self are as varied and even elusive as the characters; but each represents one mode of conquering the demonic, and each, therefore, suggests the fundamental task of becoming human. Doderer's favorite examples of this creative process are Mary, a charming woman who has lost a leg in an accident and must "regain her world," and Leonhard Kakabsa, "a factory worker who educates himself" and succeeds in transcending his limited world. In these two characters the victory over the demons, or the refusal to acquiesce, is most impressively achieved.

Wherever in the book life is made to conform to abstraction, we witness that withering of perception and judgment which Doderer persistently attacks as the characteristic disease of our time. "That is the modern experience, the clash between a first and a second reality, between which no bridge exists, and no common language, although all the individual words that make up the two languages are common to each." It is not only individuals such as the figures in this novel, but all aspects of

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the sustaining culture which seem to yield to delusion: Austria before and after the fire of 1927 serves as a telling example. What happened in the summer that is the background of *The Demons*, points to the breakdown of a long history of self-critical humanism. From then on the second reality offers itself as an irresistible temptation to substitute illusion for reality. "No insight into his own self," concludes one of the characters, a writer not unlike Doderer, "no deeper probings of himself, let alone his own feelings no matter how mighty, could confer that indubitable and tangible certainty which springs from the facts of external and material existence. These alone have real, unshakable, decisive authority. *Facta loquuntur.* Only facts speak. Depth is outside."

Doderer's insistence on the concreteness and presence of the world determines his responsibility as a novelist and his view of the craft of fiction. Although *The Demons* has none of that elusive and fragmentary texture of so much modern fiction, it gains its drive and power from Doderer's relentless attention to detail, and his absolute faith in the primacy of fact over speculation. "To recapture the actual world," he says in a recent essay, "which has in our time been paled by the second reality, is the function of present-day fiction." In this Aristotelian spirit Doderer proclaims not only his opposition to the utopian or "trans-real" German novel since Goethe but, especially, to the synthetic mode of most modern fiction. "The rain of association in Joyce, the thin plot of action that is choked in Musil's essayistic novel, and Proust's overwhelming dynamics of boredom – all these are late developments of 19th-Century fiction." These tendencies, Doderer argues, have lead to a total disintegration of the reader's sense of reality: they reflect either a radical positivism or an equally dubious faith in various forms of idealism.

In *The Demons*, Doderer attempts instead to compel the reader to develop a steady eye for an immeasurable wealth of detail and incident; yet it would be wrong to see in it merely the torrential flow of a baroque imagination. In fact, it is the priority of form over content which Doderer frequently demands. The book is plotted with remarkable precision, and all its involutions, repetitions and apparent eccentricities are held beautifully in suspense by a formal coherence far more subtle than may at first reading be apparent. If we learn only certain facts about most of the figures, it is because "the truth of their character is present in leaping images underneath everything that is said." And if the reader is baffled by the non-chronological time sequence of the narrative, he will soon realize that the progress of the action is wholly determined by the consciousness of the narrator, by "the chemistry," as Doderer says, "of the narrator's memory," and that the structure which emerges corresponds to Doderer's belief that order, in whatever form, is not a reality but a postulate. To cope with this intricate novel requires much patience; but after reading the first few chapters it is impossible to doubt that Doderer is an extraordinarily accomplished novelist and that *The Demons* is a work of remarkable intellectual and poetic power.

Philosophies and the Facts of History

by Charles Burton Marshall

"Despite the achievements in historical writing of some supreme literary artists like Thucydides and Tacitus, or Phillipe de Commynes, More, Bacon, and Clarendon, history is largely the creation of the last two centuries, and it is stamped with the character of that period," Sir David Kelly observed, "... We are still using the simplifying language of our grandfathers in regard to the highly complex history of mankind. It is the language, not of the 18th or early 19th Century, but of the second half of the 19th. The first characteristic mark of that period was the invasion of all departments of the study of mankind by the dogma of universal endless upward progress.... It was a dogma, because any inconvenient facts which did not fit into the general scheme were denied or shelved on that express ground. Its success was made easier by the fact that apart from legal and political history, the humane studies – psychology, sociology, comparitive religion – were created or reborn during that period and therefore built up by men who had no doubts whatever that the dogma must offer the key to all human problems."

The Cold War and Its Origins
by D. F. Fleming
(Doubleday; two volumes, $15)

I recall from my own college days teachers who reflected that general view. When facts failed to fit the assumption it was because of someone's errors or perversity. The possibilities alternative to the actual were invariably better. They regarded the American Civil War as an interruption. Europe of the 16th and early 17th centuries embarrassed them. History was off course then and became plausible again for them only after the peace of Westphalia. They fastened their faith in a concept of natural harmony among nations, subscribing to the sort of systematic optimism reflected in Immanuel Kant's treatise on Perpetual Peace, believing that forces of history carried all nations toward community of purpose consonant with a rational order and that the problems of world politics pertained to establishing procedures for facilitating the happy course.

Anyone holding such assumptions but finding them contested by the circumstances of the world around him must make a choice among beliefs. It is similar to the choice falling to someone regarding affluence, security, and serenity as the unfailing rewards of honest diligence but finding himself in fact beset by worry, doubt and debt – a choice either to modify his auspicious

"ARTHUR LARSON, *the* ADA's *dream Republican, feels that 'World law must be based on the legal traditions of all parts of the world, not just one part.' Since a large part of the world genuflects before cows while the other parts eat them, presumably Mr. Larson would propose a Solomon-like compromise which might assign the front half of the cow for dinner and reserve the back half for divine worship.*"

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premise about life or to resort to total self-reproach to account for its unsatisfactoriness. A late Senator from Wisconsin faced such a choice: unwilling to examine his assumption of perfect efficacy and security as the nation's natural lot, he had to embrace a conclusion of betrayal from within to account for the discrepancy between assumption and circumstance.

Anyone holding such beliefs as described by Sir David but finding them at odds with the actual circumstances of the nation's environment, the situation among nations full of tension and strife, and the questions of policy replete with contingency, paradox, and bafflement in contrast to the clarity and finality with which Kant was able to sort out the issues, would have to choose between (a) re-examining and changing his assumptions about the nature of relations among nations and the favorable opportunities offered in world affairs and (b) attributing to his own government all fault for the failure to realize such opportunities. If he felt compelled to cling to his faith, he would necessarily look homeward to place blame for shortcomings.

In a preface to his *The Cold War and Its Origins* Professor D. F. Fleming of Vanderbilt University owns to such a faith – a "profound belief" in "the irresistible force of evolution" and in "the universal aspirations for a good life which all men share." Six hundred thousand words later, near the end, he cites again "the irresistible power of evolution" and exhorts for "some faith in this law of life." The disconcerting tendency of men to define a good life in divergent and even mutually exclusive ways and of the relevant aspirations therefore to divide rather than unify is glossed over. The so-called irresistible force will take care of the problem of Communist power and purpose, he assures us, and faith in the asserted law of life will justify giving in on Berlin.

He assumes neutralization as the probable consequence of withdrawal of our support from contested marginal areas of Asia. He favors offering a plebescite for the Taiwanese to determine their future and then our abandonment of the relevant position after the probable rejection of the offer by Peking. He elides the hard aspects of the disarmament problem and urges "a strong American President" to curb "his highly patriotic military researchers" and insist "that the arms race be halted and ended by a drastic general disarmament treaty" – as simple as that. He sees rosy possibilities in disengagement. He comes out for the usual unimaginable, benign abstractions – "a new spirit," "relaxation of tensions," "community," and "a search for healing and unifying things to do through the UN." And so on.

His analytic narrative of the Cold War is far more interesting, if no more persuasive, than his concluding recommendations. He began in 1947 marshaling material for his examination of events and problems in world affairs revolving around the position, power, and purposes of the Communist regimes. The ensuing search through memoirs, monographs, magazine articles, newspaper accounts, editorials, and columns, and official documents in wide variety was remarkable for its range, though subject to a factor of bias beyond an author's control. What Napoleon called the fog of war lies – but lies unevenly – over the Cold War; a scarcity of material from Communist sources affording opportunity for a prying, critical eye to examine imperfections, disputes, and uncertainties attending the conduct of policy contrasts with a relative abundance of such material on this side.

The account sticks closely to chronological order, beginning with a background of the Russian civil war and leaving off soon after the failure of the summit conference following the U-2 debacle a year ago last spring. Regrettably, because of the time factor in producing so large a book, we miss his evaluations of such developments as the Congo quarrel (just getting under way as he closed), Khrushchev's UN foray last fall, the troika scheme, the Kennedy Administration's experiment with civility, the Cuba fumble, the Vienna tête-à-tête, the deterioration in Laos accompanied by an imbalance of deeds and words on our side, the heightening dangers in Vietnam, the critical turn in Berlin, the military takeover in Korea, recent events related to issues of concord and division within the Communist area, the continued frustration of disarmament negotiations, and the Soviet Union's resumption of nuclear testing (which Professor Fleming's text anticipates and implicitly justifies). I suspect that intervening events would not have modified his judgments beyond perhaps depressing the estimate of the efficacy of the Chinese communes.

I repeatedly differ with his estimates of what counts. The 1955 Geneva summit talks – to my view merely a diversion into rhetoric, which dissipated on first contact with specifics – he regards as having achieved an actual resolution of the Cold War, which was subsequently renewed by American perversity. He assigns high importance to former President Eisenhower's peace excursions in late 1959 – still recalling as significant a New Delhi student's sigh: "He has taken a part of our hearts." I should rate this sort of thing evanescent. He attaches high significance to views resolved at a meeting in Cleveland three years ago of a study group on foreign policy called together by the National Council of Churches. I followed its work closely at the time and set it down as an example of the quixoticism of good men dealing with subjects beyond their ambit.

Yet portions of his book are effectively critical. The evidences of research are usually impressive – though there are exceptions as when he speculates on the likelihood that of the South Koreans as the real malefactors in launching the attack on June 25, 1950. In truth, the documented order of battle for the attack by North Korean divisions was eventually captured by United Nations forces.

In the view pervading the book, the contest of purpose among the great powers is dangerous, onerous, and an obstacle to better things. Surely anyone can imagine preferable alternatives, but judgment in such matters turns on the degree of one's assurance that a unilateral withdrawal from the contest would ensure a better sequel. Fleming feels confident about it. His premise about life ensures this. So he wants to call the Cold War off. He thinks it should never have begun and belabors the Western powers, especially the United States and such leaders as Harry S. Truman and Dean Acheson, for ever having commenced opposition to the Communists. He is sure that things

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would have turned out well if they had not done so and that Franklin D. Roosevelt would never have made the mistake of launching such opposition. Who knows? These views are elements of faith. When cleaving to it requires discounting evidence, Professor Fleming is equal to the requirement. He prefers to extoll peace, overlooking that policy must deal not with the abstractions but the actual conditions of peace. More or less implicit in his examination of unsatisfactory events is an assumption of the enduring availability of superior alternatives – given only will and gumption to seize them. Such a premise makes it easy to be devastatingly critical of policy in the actual.

The Poet of the City

by William Jay Smith

Although known to English and French readers through scattered translations over the years, the most famous modern Greek poet, C. P. Cavafy, did not acquire an audience in this country until a translation of his poems by John Mavrogordato appeared in 1952, nine years after his death in Alexandria at the age of 70. Even then the poems received less attention than one would have expected; now with Miss Rae Dalven's new translation of the complete poems he seems destined to attain a somewhat larger degree of the regard that he merits. Ironically, the way was prepared for Miss Dalven's translation not so much through the work of Mavrogordato and others or through the critical appraisals of E. M. Forster or C. M. Bowra as through the novels of Lawrence Durrell. Mr. Durrell's Alexandria quartet teems with characters but there is none more important than the one who broods in the wings over the entire work, although he never comes on stage in person to take part in the action. He is referred to simply as the "old poet" or the "poet of the city," and without him it is safe to say that Mr. Durrell would not have composed his quartet.

The Complete Poems of Cavafy
translated by Rae Dalven
with an introduction by W. H. Auden
(Harcourt, Brace & World; $6.75)

Alexandria, with its blend of sensuality and skepticism, was the focal point of C. P. Cavafy's life and work; he almost never left it literally, and it spiritually never left him. Constantine P. Cavafy, as he is generally known to the English-speaking world, was the son of a wealthy cotton-broker. In 1881, at the time of an uprising in Alexandria against the foreign communities, his mother took him and his brothers to Constantinople, where he applied himself to the study of Byzantine and Hellenic history, for which he developed a passionate interest. It was here also that he began the study of demotic Greek, and wrote his first poems. When he returned to Alexandria three years later, he continued his study and writing. Then, the commercial life of the Greek community having been virtually destroyed, he found it necessary to earn his own living, and went to work as a temporary clerk in the Ministry of Irrigation. He remained at this temporary post for 30 years until his retirement in 1922.

E. M. Forster described Cavafy to English readers the following year in an essay in *Pharos and Pharillon* as a Greek gentleman in a straw hat whom one might chance to meet on the streets of Alexandria, "standing absolutely motionless at a slight angle to the universe." He is on his way, Forster says, either from his flat to his office, or from his office to his flat. If it is the former, he will vanish at once "with a slight gesture of despair." If it is the latter, he may be prevailed upon to begin a sentence dealing with "the tricky behavior of the Emperor Alexius Comnenus in 1096, or with olives, their possibilities and price, or with the fortunes of friends, or George Eliot, or the dialects of the interior of Asia Minor." The sentence, delivered with ease in Greek, English, or French, stands also, Forster feels, "at a slight angle to the universe," for, he concludes, it is "the sentence of a poet." Out of such sentences, and from this

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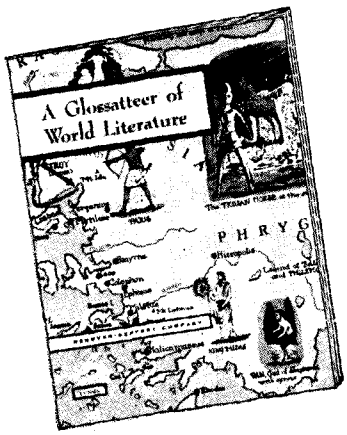

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odd angle, Cavafy wrote his poetry.

Cavafy spent his life in the old Greek quarter of Alexandria, at 10 rue Lepsius, where he lived in a lamp-lit and candle-lit house amid old-fashioned Arabian furniture and untidy bookshelves. According to one biographer, he "would honor an especially beautiful guest by lighting another candle, taking care to remain in the shadow himself." The gesture is significant, for as Robert Liddell has put it, Cavafy was as reticent in conversation as he was outspoken in poetry: "some things he said needed art to make them beautiful." Out of the shabby and sordid, the dim, confused, and neglected aspects of life he wrote poetry; and it is the sharpness of his eye that made it possible for him to do so. He focuses on a small historical detail or a minor figure of history, and then to these fragments he holds the candle of his attention close-up as to a face. The fragment remains a fragment but every portion of it is so clearly delineated and intensified by the light of his vision that it suggests and illuminates an entire frieze which the reader is left to complete for himself.

Cavafy's poetry is a poetry of moments, carefully chosen from his own life and from the historical past. They are brilliantly lit small dramas, pieces of polished mosaic, each complete in itself and each evoking the entire pattern of a life and a civilization. He is in the tradition of the Greek epigrammatists, Callimachus, Appollonius of Rhodes, and the Alexandrine poets of the Greek anthology. Cavafy, remembering perhaps the words of Callimachus, librarian at Alexandria, that a "big book is a big evil," wrote short poems; there is in them no excess verbiage and no unnecessary description. They are dry and understated, not without compassion but rarely marred by self pity. He is said to have written about seventy poems a year, of which he saved only four or five. Cavafy called himself a "poet-historian." "I, I could never write a novel or a play," he once remarked, "but I feel in me a hundred and twenty-five voices that tell me that I could write history."

It is no accident that the characters in Durrell's quartet refer to the "*old* poet." Cavafy began as a middle-aged writer: his first book, containing only fourteen poems, was published when he was forty-one. Throughout his later poems, which he circulated privately among his friends, he speaks always as an old man, looking back over his life as if it were part of history, relying on his memory to record accurately and dispassionately the events and characters of earlier years. His love poems frequently have titles such as "Days of 1896," "Days of 1901," "Days of 1908," as though based on the notes in an old agenda. Two words that recur frequently throughout are "memory" and "vision." Cavafy seems at times to be looking down a long, dusty, and ever-narrowing corridor on to which, from side rooms, brightly lit but ghostly figures enter and depart and then blend again with the dark. He has been compared to Proust, whose work he scarcely knew; and the poems do at times suggest a Proust in miniature. But rather than exemplifying Bergsonian "duration," they grow out of the "space-time" relation that Durrell explores in his "word continuum."

Cavafy said he was neither Hellene nor Hellenist but Hellenic. He took his themes not from the classical Greek world of Homer and Pericles, but from the periphery of Greek civilization, from Asia Minor, from cities like Antioch and Alexandria, with their blending of races, languages, and creeds. As C. M. Bowra has said, "What Yeats found for a time in old Irish legends, what Eliot found for *The Wasteland* in figures and events from anthropology, Cavafy found much less laboriously in the Hellenistic past." Supreme among Cavafy's heroes was Antony, symbol of Alexandria and the defeat of the East. Cavafy's poems have been said to fall into three categories: erotic, philosophic, and historical. Although the greatest number are historical, the erotic poems, because they are so candidly homosexual, are perhaps the best known. One European critic deplores the introduction into the later work of a "*louche* and boring company of workmen or shop assistants in pink or mauve shirts," and would make an understanding of Cavafy hinge completely on his sexual abnormality. Certainly homosexual love in its unenduring nature and its attendant guilt has not been so coldly and carefully presented anywhere in modern poetry. But to say that Cavafy's erotic bent is the sole controlling factor of his entire work is surely to simplify what is simple only on the surface.

If in reading Cavafy one is at times reminded of Whitman, it is usually when he is being, as he is only in passing, general:

> "The years of my young manhood, my sensual life – how plainly I see their meaning now."

One can imagine where Whitman would have gone from there – to a vague and mystical picture of young manhood all over America; how different is Cavafy's conclusion:

> "Deep in the dissolute life of my young manhood the designs of my poetry took shape, the scope of my art was being plotted.
> "This is why even my repentances were never stable. And my resolutions to restrain myself, to change, lasted for two weeks at the very most."

The scope of Whitman's art was also being plotted in his young manhood, and there are in his poems moments of remorse for his dissolute life, but he would have been entirely incapable of so direct and self-revealing a statement. From his sensual life Whitman developed a vision of the resurgence of a young nation, an optimistic outlook; from his, Cavafy summoned up a vision of an old decayed civilization, a pessimistic view that spares itself nothing in its cold analysis. For all his cataloguing of particulars, Whitman is never anything but general; Cavafy is nothing if not particular. Cavafy's art is clearly art for art's sake; Whitman's is art in spite of art. And yet for all the sharp outlines of his poetry, Cavafy is not without his mystical moments; he delights in the Byzantine traditions of the Greek church. And perhaps, through touching the East in such different ways, if only by combining something of life's religious and sensual aspects, they are closer than they technically and temperamentally might at first seem.

In his introduction to Miss Dalven's translations, W. H. Auden speaks of his debt to Cavafy, whom he first read in translation thirty years ago. Since poetry is, of course, untranslatable, Mr. Auden is perplexed by the fact that

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Cavafy should have come through so clearly to him in English and French translations; it is his conclusion that the poet survives translation because of his distinctive tone of voice, his personal speech. A poem of Cavafy, even translated by different hands, is unmistakable; no one else would have written it. Mr. Auden is right; and Cavafy's tone of voice is so clear that it reaches us in this volume even through Miss Dalven's awkwardnesses, inaccuracies of English idiom, and plain grammatical errors. (Why these errors should have been necessary when the lines are frequently given correctly in Mr. Mavrogordato's translation is not clear.) Miss Dalven's labor is not without its bright moments, however, and her book is especially valuable for the versions of the early and previously uncollected poems which she has taken great pains to assemble. The reader, coming to Cavafy for the first time, will want to read the Dalven and Mavrogordato translations together, and to "transplant" from the two, as Lawrence Durrell does in the notes to *Justine*, his own version.

Balthazar in *Justine* says of the "old poet" that to "the Cartesian proposition: 'I think therefore I am,' he opposed his own, which must have gone something like this: 'I imagine, therefore I belong and am free'." With him one "had the feeling that he was catching every minute as it flew and turning it upside down to expose its happy side." In Cavafy's poem "Tomb of Iases" the epitaph is addressed to the traveler who, if an Alexandrian, will know "the rushing torrent of our life; what ardor it has; what supreme pleasure." It is of this torrent that Cavafy wrote, and because he could envisage its continuity he could bring it to rest in the clear pools that constitute his poems.

Academic Haves and Havenots

by Christopher Jencks

James Conant has always had the gifts of a statesman: an ability to differentiate the important from the merely intriguing, a sense for the order of priorities among things that are actually important. He was a distinguished president of Harvard, and no doubt he would also make a distinguished Superintendent of Schools in New York or California now that he has turned his attention from higher to secondary education. Certainly his three "reports" on American secondary schools (*The American High School Today, Education in the Junior High School Years,* and now *Slums and Suburbs*) contain a greater wealth of pragmatic advice on school reform than any other books I know on the subject.

Slums and Suburbs
by James B. Conant
(McGraw-Hill; $3.95)

In *The American High School Today* Conant discussed the little-publicized problems confronting educators in small-town and rural America – educators who handle a third of America's secondary students. He pointed out that schools with less than five hundred students usually have too few college-bound students, and too few specialist teachers, to provide adequate advanced instruction in mathematics, science, and foreign languages. He urged that such schools be consolidated, to resemble the larger comprehensive high schools of middle-sized American towns – a type of school in which a third of the nation's secondary students are already enrolled.

In *Slums and Suburbs* Conant turns his attention to the most commonly discussed third of the secondary school population, those who live in the great metropolitan areas. The schools in these areas are not "comprehensive" in the usual sense. They do not serve a whole community. Rather, urban residential patterns have ensured that some neighborhood schools are mainly upper-middle class, preparing boys for professional and semi-professional jobs and preparing girls to be their wives, while other schools are mainly lower-class, preparing both boys and girls for unskilled jobs – or for unemployment. Although a great defender of comprehensive schools in medium-sized

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towns, Conant accepts the differentiation of urban schools on the ground that the contrasts in background and ambition between urban students are so great that they cannot all be dealt with under a single roof.

Conant's political gifts are nowhere clearer than in his discussion of the slum school, and of the related problem of juvenile delinquency. Many critics have described the magnitude and pathos of urban malignancies: the alienation of slum dwellers, both young and old, from the mainstream of middleclass American life; their lack of family stability, economic security, or social ties; their inability to imagine a future any better than the repetitive and cheerless present. Conant's contribution is his emphasis on the only point at which this vicious circle might be broken: the job market. So long as the unemployment rate among urban adolescents is two to three times the national average, not only will there be both time and motive for juvenile crime, but many high school pupils will see schooling as a completely pointless exercise, like being required to go through basic training in the army when there is no war to be fought. If schools undertook to find their pupils jobs, to keep track of their graduates' and leavers' careers, and to cooperate with the economic community in creating jobs where none now exist, Conant thinks they might acquire a real relevance and influence in the lives of the disaffected street-corner adolescent. Certainly it is hard to deny that until schools become gateways to the respectable middle-class "all-American" way of life, they can hardly expect to convert their students to the values which this life extolls.

Conant's sense of feasibility is as evident in his proposal for helping schools in the suburbs as in his proposal for the slums. He realizes that the schools are not autonomous institutions like hospitals, which can be changed by the self-regulating profession which runs them. Rather, they are the base of an immense pyramid, whose apex is the business and professional world. School boards are dominated by people from this world, and schools are intended mainly to make their students become like school board members. If schools are to be radically changed, then, the initiative must usually come from above, particularly from the professional and vocational programs which link education to the adult world. So if you want to make bright students in suburban schools really hit the books, instead of being content merely to do a bit better than their mediocre classmates, the proper strategy is to confront them with minimal levels of academic achievement for entry into their chosen career – or more practically, for entry into their chosen professional school. At first glance this seems merely a watered-down version of the oft-repeated proposal for a national high school graduation exam, or for national college admission requirements. But the differences between the two approaches are crucial. First, the professions have the power to set requirements and enforce them, whereas no national body can set standards for our free-wheeling secondary schools and colleges. In the second place, admission requirements for professional schools would hit only the gifted minority who really can and should work harder in school. They would not penalize the dull but diligent student headed for a middle-level business job, who will never master calculus or French, but wants and needs four years in college to grow up. Third, delaying achievement tests until a student applies to graduate school would allow the slow starter a chance to make up for his high school delinquencies in college – and would allow the student who attended a fourth-rate high school at least one chance to enter the more exacting professional world.

Only at one point does Conant's political acumen fail him. His comments on integration are unfortunate – not because they are wrong, but because they have aroused a storm of controversy which will do no good and will divert attention from more important things. Conant's error is that he cares more about improving the lot of Negro students than about establishing and revenging the culpability of prejudiced Caucasians. He urges that school boards should be color blind, assigning students to schools without regard to race. If these school boards happen to be responsible for areas in which residential segregation is prevalent, he says that is not their fault. Importing Negroes into all-white schools will not, in Conant's view, do any real good to anyone but school bus manufacturers. On the face of it this seems self-evident. Yet civil righters have recently discovered that teachers are, on the whole, far more liberal than real estate entrepreneurs. Both Negroes and whites have attempted to use the schools for "back-door" integration of neighborhoods which had previously resisted Negro incursions. The effect of such maneuvers on children of both races, who soon realize that they are being made pawns in their parents' political hassels, can be easily foreseen.

Conant's alternative to mass deportation of children from their black and white ghettos is that integration be begun with the faculty rather than the students. He does not say, but one can readily see, that once Negroes are established on a school staff, a start has been made not only toward racial cooperation, but towards their acceptance as respectable members of a particular community. The difficulty is that Conant's program would take time, which is something of which civil righters have very little.

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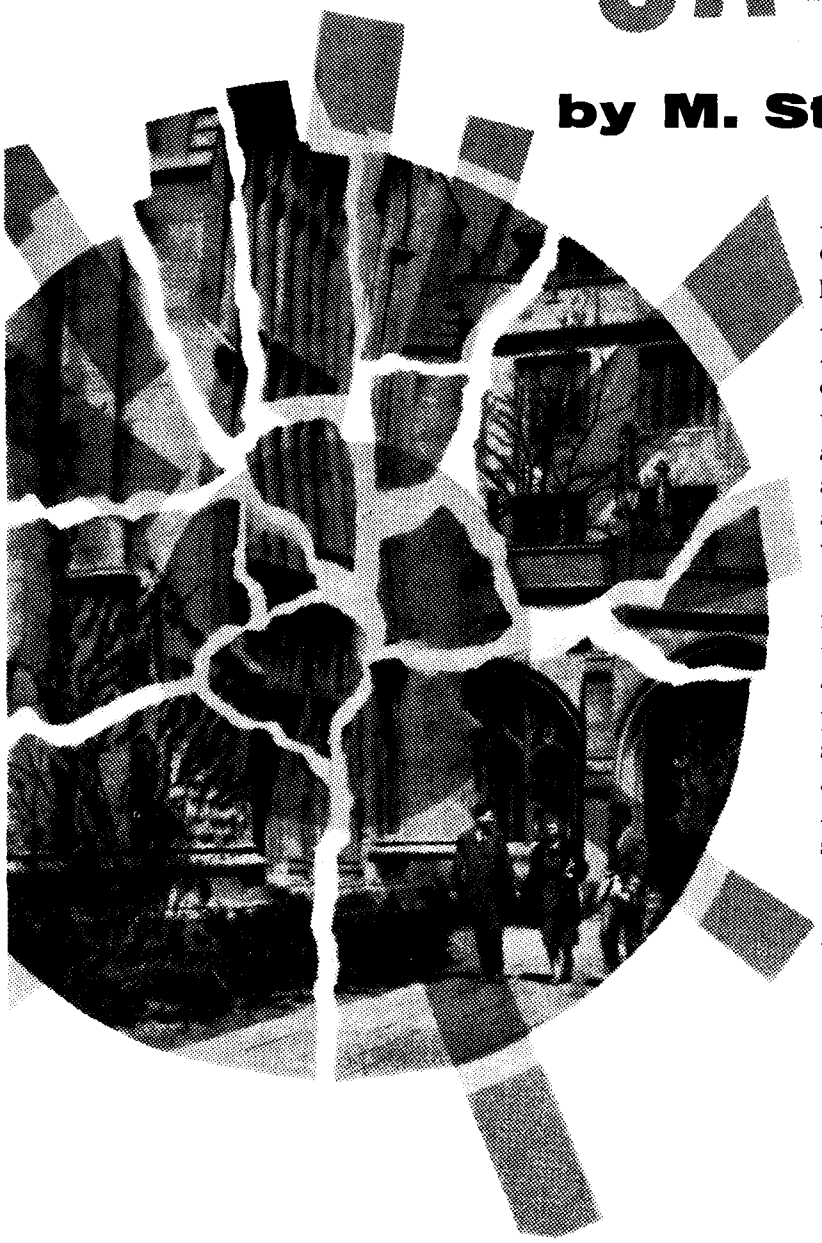
REVOLT ON THE CAMPUS

by M. Stanton Evans



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Stanton Evans is a product of the movement of which he writes. As a Yale undergraduate he was a founding member of the Conservative Club and editor of its publication, *The Independent*. He also served as Editor of *Comment Magazine* and Feature Editor for the *Yale Daily News*. After graduation he became successively Assistant Editor of *The Freeman*, Louisville Editor for *National Review* and Managing Editor of *Human Events*.

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A Masterpiece of Parody

by Frank Getlein

Little Me
by Patrick Dennis
(Dutton; $5.95)

The subtitle is "The Intimate Memoirs of Belle Poitrine as told to" the author; from there to the end – 270 pages and 150 photographs later – the book is a masterpiece of parody of a sub-form that has needed this treatment for a long time. The form – the memories of an aging entertainment personality as pulled into shape by a high-class hack – may be said to invite the treatment, but the invitation is treacherous; Rube Goldberg accepted it a couple of years ago and got thoroughly bogged down in his detestation of both the subject and the form. Dennis has resisted that temptation and come up with a winner that compares, technically, with the similar technical achievements of Cervantes and Fielding.

Literary burlesque is a tricky thing in any size; but to create it and maintain it for a full book is something of a minor miracle. The problem is interest. In a sense the parody aspect of the book is told complete on the dust jacket with its gorgeous color photo of Belle. As soon as you have the title, the subtitle and the "as told to" you've heard the joke. Craftsmanship keeps it alive for the full course. Artistry turns it into a work of literature far above the quality not only of its models but also of such "serious" show-biz art-works as *The Day of the Locust, The Deer Park* and *Sunset Boulevard,* all three of which are marred by a fundamental sentimentality foreign to Dennis and to his heroine, Belle Poitrine.

The nomenclature throughout is a delight and is the most obvious example of the craftsmanship. Early on Belle brings off a marriage with the Earl of Baughdie and the couple stays, naturally, in Baughdie House, London. Characters include Magdalene Montezuma, Letch Feeley, Carstairs Bagley. Similarly, the use of quotation marks around words felt by Belle to be exotic or technical is expert and rewarding.

More important is the structure. The story is of the daughter of a middle-western whore who herself begins as delinquent, a player in dirty movies and a call girl, but who parlays her sex and an occasional murder into nobility, stardom and plain old wealth. But it is not a steady ascent from one peak to the next. Each up is followed by a down just a shade worse than the up was good, mounting finally to a drunken attempt at suicide followed by "I Find God at Southampton." The rhythm is that of the czardas, wilder and wilder, but the wildness itself firmly controlled.

Most important of all, probably, is the attitude of the first person narrator, Belle Poitrine. She manages to describe her career – in and out of bed and bordello – with total sympathy for herself and never overtly referring to

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Delmore Schwartz *was awarded the Bollingen Prize in 1960 for his book of poems,* Summer Knowledge. *He has recently completed a new novel.*

Burling Lowrey's *newest book is an anthology,* Twentieth Century Parody: American and British.

Richmond Lattimore, *professor of classics at Bryn Mawr, is the author of one book of poems and the translator and editor of numerous classical texts.*

Honor Tracy's *newest novel is* A Season of Mists. *An Anglo-Irish novelist, Miss Tracy is best-known for* The Straight and Narrow Path.

Daniel M. Friedenberg *has written extensively on Latin American affairs.*

Charles G. Bolte *is a member of a New York publishing house.*

Victor Lange *is professor of Germanic Languages at Princeton.*

Charles Burton Marshall *is the author of* The Limits of Foreign Policy.

William Jay Smith *is poet-in-residence at Williams College. He is also a Democratic member of the Vermont State Legislature.*

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what is actually going on. This beautifully written attitude is epitomized in the several murder scenes: as the gun goes off "everything went black." Exquisitely, the book ends as another murder is about to take place, Belle deliciously planning to remove one more obstacle to peace of mind and at the same time firmly hiding from herself the accident she is arranging.

Thus it is that Belle and her story become much more important than the idiot world of the movies they burlesque. The photographs, by Cris Alexander, catch the mood and the style perfectly and add considerably to the epic feeling of it all. It is in the photographs that an occasional slip takes place, revealing a view of Belle that she either would not or could not give you in photographic evidence, but when you find them you don't really care. The mind of Belle Poitrine has you firmly in its grasp.

MOVIES

Four Knaves and a King

Town Without Pity is about rape, and one sits watching the interesting themes in it pass by, virgin and untouched. Based on a novel by Manfred Gregor (who also wrote the novel on which *The Bridge* was based), it concerns the assault of a 16-year-old girl by four US soldiers in Occupied Germany in 1950; and it raises a number of provocative ideas.

Town Without Pity (United Artists)
King of Kings (M-G-M)

First, the corrupting effect of occupation. Boredom is the soldier's second biggest hazard even in wartime; in peacetime it is Number One. This rape is an unplanned *acte gratuit* and is potentially the source of an honest dramatic inquiry.

Second, the lasciviousness of public morality. Even more than weddings and vice raids, news of rape excites: possibly on the "cut-loaf" theory, plus a latent belief in the Fall from which there is no Return.

Third, the subtle psycho-sexual relationship between father and daughter and how it is heightened in a rape case. The mother is heart-broken, but the father is implacably enraged. It is he who insists on proceeding with the prosecution even though it means the torture of his daughter on the witness stand. It is he (one feels) who has been most grievously assaulted, and it is he who demands revenge.

Fourth, the complexities of legal process (here a US Army court-martial). A trial deals only with that portion of the truth of a case which the rules of evidence and of applicable trial practice make admissible. Often, as lawyers know, this is a small portion of the whole truth.

The film starts all these hares, then lets them scamper free, never having decided which of them it is following. It ends with the girl's suicide because her boy friend is arrested by his mother in order to prevent his taking her away where they might have a frank beginning. The rapists' defense counsel (Kirk Douglas) feels remorse and is sick, as if it were his fault that the girl was trapped and hounded by her father's imbalance and the town's prurience.

All of this is padded with irrelevant banter between Douglas and a stock girl-reporter, and is written and directed with that resolute candor that boomerangs when the fearless revelation is muddled. Douglas' vision of acting has now narrowed down to give the impression that, however intellectual or sophisticated his part, he may at any moment punch someone. He obviously insists on at least one scene of physical violence in every script, as a safety valve or audience sop, and he manages a tiny one even here.

Christine Kaufmann (no relation, alas) is buxom and pitiful as the victim. E. G. Marshall fights without success to make a character out of the prosecutor. The most attractive performance is that of Ingrid van Bergen as a tart who hates the respectable, generous town girls. The shapely Miss

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van Bergen, also now vividly visible in a German film called *Roses for the Prosecutor*, has the shrewd, humorous gutter sexuality of the early Marlene Dietrich – but with a better voice and with less posturing.

It is hard to imagine a *New Republic* reader – of whatever faith – who will hurry to *King of Kings*, the three-hour Technicolor life of Jesus, but as the film will doubtless be around as long as *Ben-Hur*, some comment is probably needed. It can be accomplished with two quotations.

From *America*, the Jesuit weekly: "Christ is there as a physical presence, but his spirit is absent. . . . There is not the slightest possibility that anyone will derive from the film any meaningful insight into what Christ's life and sufferings signify for us." From *Variety*: "[Nicholas Ray, the director] asserted he was proud of the film for its nondenominational aspect."

I need add only that the film is bathed in the awed reverence of those whose main concern in making a religious picture is not to affirm faith but to avoid offending a single potential customer. One more quotation – from the original script: "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

STANLEY KAUFFMANN

Correspondence

George Washington Ayub

Sirs:

In "George Washington Ayub" (October 30) you imply that "the excesses of hospitality" extended to President Ayub Khan during his "triumphal summer visit to the US" has since led him to an imprudent and arrogant course of action. You describe him as one who "forcibly superseded" republican institutions by martial rule.

This is a biased and inaccurate picture. Ayub Khan's dealings with India, alone is evidence that he is neither imprudent nor arrogant. What bothers me though is your easy assumption that Pakistan is less democratic since Ayub than before. Our brand of democracy was developed by centuries of trial and error. It is a highly sophisticated concept. When transplanted to a new country like Pakistan – which was created in conditions of chaos with only a small educated class – it is fragile indeed.

Pakistan's former "republican institutions" brought widespread corruption; a multiplicity of meaningless political parties and an economy dominated by large landlords and unprincipled businessmen. To hold it up as a democracy is a disservice to our own institutions.

Much of this has been changed under President Ayub. His experiment in "basic democracy" is watched with intense interest in neighboring countries – even in India where one of its highest officials told me there exists only a "talking democracy."

In the newer countries, authoritarian rule is not necessarily dictatorship in the South American or Fascist style. It can be a means of building, from the ground up, free but responsible institutions. In such countries, where large uneducated masses exist, or where there exist large numbers of educated youth with no occupational opportunities, liberty can be a breeding ground of demogogy and chaos. I think we should wait a few more years before dismissing President Kennedy's parallel between General George Washington and Marshal Ayub Khan.

Curtis Campaigne
Montclair, New Jersey

Survival

Sirs:

In a letter published in your October 30 issue, Dr. R. E. Reinert, referring to Herman Kahn's proposition that "a few of us can survive a nuclear war," states that this line of thought "perpetuates a dangerous delusion in leading men to believe that the causes for which they fight can survive even if they don't."

It is rather obvious that Dr. Reinert has misread Mr. Kahn, for Kahn asserts that not only "a few," but *many* of us can survive a nuclear war. This survival, of course, depends on adequate preparation, which in turn depends on the will of individuals to make this preparation.

In discussing this will, and especially the lack of it, Dr. Reinert explains the lack by the fact that so many "believe that life after a nuclear war would contain no values worth living or dying

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for." I do not know whether or not Dr. Reinert is included in this group of individuals, but I do think that it should be pointed out to this group, as Mr. Kahn has done, that after such a war the only way in which *any* values, especially those that have guided this nation, can be perpetuated is by the action of living beings. Those who have prepared for the war and who have survived it must begin to rebuild (a task which would be simplified by proper preparation before the war), always keeping in mind these values. There will be values after this war only if there are people after this war. And there can be people only if those who are so concerned with these values at the present time begin to take some positive action to make it possible for these values to be perpetuated in the future.

Philip A. Dyna
Georgetown University
Washington, D. C.

Nigeria: The Postcard Incident

Sirs:

Like the great majority of Americans, I am sympathetic to the expressed aims of the Peace Corps. I am pleased to note, therefore, that the unfortunate "postcard" incident is coming to be regarded as of minor consequence. The general reaction reflected in the press seems to be that, while the young lady was indiscreet in her remarks (or at least in the manner of giving them expression), the remarks themselves were probably accurate. This is a grave injustice of the city of Ibadan and to the University College located there.

But a few months ago I went up for the first time to Ibadan – the largest all-African city, I was told, in the world. I drove up a paved highway from the coast past a huge cement factory, past the towers that permit direct dialing of radio-telephone from Lagos, past prosperous plantations of cocoa and tapioca.

I entered the city through heavy automobile traffic and stopped to watch construction proceedings on the city's third sky-scraper, 32 stories high.

I went on past impressive "Broadway House," past the elaborate television station which broadcasts sixteen hours a day and which has its commercial time sold out for the next six months (no commercials on Sunday), past the modern and attractive buildings which house the government offices of the Federation's Western Division, past the huge hospital, the massive sports stadium, and on to the campus of University College – where Peace Corps personnel are in training. So attractive is this new and expanding campus that I gave serious thought to the possibility that one day I might be privileged to bring my family and teach there.

Without a doubt, by searching a bit, one could find "primitive" conditions in Ibadan and, certainly, in the outlying bush. With the same searching, one could uncover unsightly conditions in most of our own major cities.

Nigeria has vast problems yet unsolved if she is to give her people the educational standards and economic levels which they hope for and anticipate. But her progress thus far deserves recognition and applause.

John L. Peters, President
World Neighbors, Inc.

West Side Story

Sirs:

According to Mr. Stanley Kauffmann (October 23, 1961), the film *West Side Story* "produces the same brilliant effect as the play," resulting in the "best film musical ever made."

Naturally, all this excellence costs dearly. The price? – "our disappointment that it isn't even better." My enthusiasm feels the tug, but still prepares to soar. Alas! not yet. Mr. Kauffmann is having more second thoughts – on the cultural inflation of our time? – and notes sadly that he left the film as he once left the same play: "feeling that I had been cheated of a potentially tremendous experience."

My sagging enthusiasm is still rallying gamely when, suddenly, Mr. Kauffmann announces that "The attempt at high tragedy is simply unsuccessful."

If Mr. Kauffmann and I think and write in the same language, it is altogether possible he means to tell me: *West Side Story* is an urgent, contemporary work of art, unfortunately marred by a weak story; but, happily, brought to life by a marvelous score and by particularly brilliant choreography; taken as a whole, the performance may be uneven. Full stop.

Jay Lerner
Chicago, Illinois

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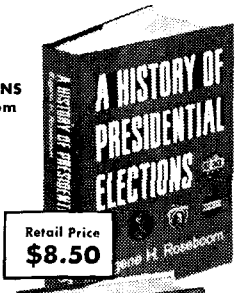

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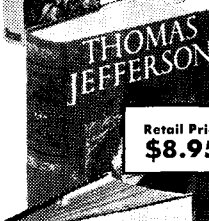

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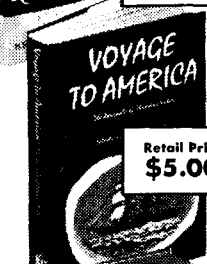

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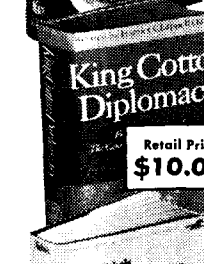

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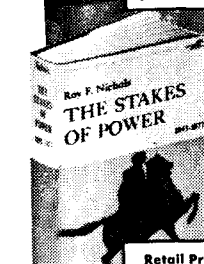

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